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■ Raymond Aron:
Without Regrets.
A Memoir

Partisan Review 1

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On Mary McCarthy

William Phillips
"The Liberal Conspiracy"

Edith Kurzweil
The Freudians

Tsvetan Todorov
The Modern Gadfly

Stanley Kauffmann
Remembrance of a German Past

Jeffrey Herf
Poland's Spring

Susan Dunn
The Dark Side of July 14th

Roger Shattuck
Proust's Mysteries
of Thought

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Correction: In Paul Hollander's review of *The Fellow Travellers* by David Caute (*PR* 4 , 1989, p. 655), his sentence, "One would like to know if he still believes that old and new left have nothing in common, having added Cuba and its admirers to the new edition," appeared erroneously to be part of a quotation from *The Fellow Travellers*. Our apologies.

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Comment

"THE LIBERAL CONSPIRACY"

The Liberal Conspiracy by Peter Coleman is a rather prosaic but diligently detailed book about an episode that has faded into history. It is an account – to some extent a one-sided one – of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Coleman was one of its cohorts, though he does try to give a balanced view. It also contains a number of errors. However, the book is full of facts up to now known only to insiders and of gossip lifted to the level of information. It raises, if only indirectly, a number of interesting political questions: about Soviet propaganda, Western intellectuals, anticommunism, the CIA, and the entire issue of secret funding and control of cultural publications. The book also revives baffling questions about whether the leaders of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the editors of its magazines knew of the role of the CIA. On the whole, the book is about a time before Gorbachev changed the terms of the East-West conflict.

But the events documented in *The Liberal Conspiracy* are part of our intellectual history, and the record should be as accurate as possible. For this reason, let me state my own involvement in these issues. I had no official connections with the Congress or its publications, though I knew most of its actors quite well. I was, it might be said, a fringe player in the global propaganda game. I was a member for a time of the Executive Committee of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, which had a stormy relation to the Congress before it finally severed its organizational affiliation, though I was privy neither to its internal proceedings and calculations nor its finances. Nevertheless, so far as I knew, the American Committee did not receive any money from the CIA, either directly or through the Congress. We operated on a shoestring and, it seemed, were always broke. I was quite critical of the Congress, as were many members of the American Committee, but while some of them felt it was not genuinely anticommunist, I was more inclined to question its bureaucratic makeup and what was patently its secret control from the top. I was shocked by – and perhaps envious of – the *nouveau riche* look of the whole operation, by the posh apartments of the

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Congress officials, the seemingly inexhaustible funds for travel, the big-time expense accounts, and all the other perks usually associated with the executives of large corporations. After all, *Partisan Review* was always trying to make ends meet, and my experience had led me to believe that poverty was the normal condition for serious political outfits and literary magazines.

From the beginning, I was not asked to any inner council meetings of the Congress, nor was I invited to any public ones, with one exception: a big sprawling affair in Berlin in 1950. Thus I was an outsider, but moved in circles that crossed those of the Congress, and hence knew a good deal about its operation and sensed even more. However, some of the revelations in Coleman's book are quite new and startling. For example, it never occurred to me that the CIA could be lax in its anticommunism.

The Congress, it will be recalled, was planned at secret meetings by a small group of hardened anticommunists that included at different times Sidney Hook, Melvin Lasky, James Burnham, Arthur Koestler, Irving Brown, and Michael Josselson, a CIA agent, who became the director and driving force of the Congress and its far-flung network of magazines and conferences. Soon such figures as Raymond Aron, Manés Sperber, Nicholas Nabokov, who was appointed its secretary-general, François Bondy, Jean Bloch-Michel, Ignazio Silone, and Arthur Schlesinger were drawn into its executive activities. The Congress was funded by the CIA until this was exposed by *The New York Times* in 1966, and by Thomas Braden, one of the CIA agents who helped set up the funding operation, in *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1967. Braden revealed many details of the CIA involvement, including the fact that it had placed one agent in the Congress and another as an editor of *Encounter*. After this exposé, the CIA had to step out, and the Ford Foundation took over the support of the Congress, but on a reduced scale, and the old guard was replaced by a new leadership. The Congress also acquired a new name, the International Association for Cultural Freedom. But the organization lost its original élan and was dissolved in 1979.

All through its existence, the source of the Congress's lavish funding was speculated about in New York literary circles and its efficacy debated – though there were inevitable differences of opinion about its aims and the possibility of achieving them with covert money. But with much of the inner story made available by Coleman, we might be in a better position to answer some of the questions raised by what now can be seen as a bizarre enterprise: an attempt by a democratic nation to adopt the methods of a totalitarian one, to combat the vast propaganda machine of the Soviet Union directed by the KGB. The political stereotypes of the CIA, of the anticommunists, and of the Congress simply do not tell this incredible story.

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For one thing, the CIA was not regarded at the time as the evil underground empire it has since been perceived in many liberal circles. It has to be remembered that we had fought what liberals and the left regarded as a just war, and all the agencies of the government had left-liberal support. Indeed, during the war against Hitler many liberals and radicals cooperated with the CIA. But even more important is the little-publicized fact that the CIA, unlike the FBI, at the time was an elitist outfit, staffed largely by academics, and that it had a strong liberal-leftish wing. In fact, it was this wing that initiated the creation of the Congress and its journals. According to Coleman, Allen Dulles, himself, approved of the entire project, which was based on the belief that only the liberals and the left could effectively oppose communism – a view which appeared to be at least partly true, though this depended on whether one meant the anticommunist left or the noncommunist left. The right in this country had indicated that what it thought was evil in communism was precisely its "progressive" appeal. Hence its methods of fighting communism had proven to be completely ineffectual, particularly in Europe, at least for writers and intellectuals.

Within the CIA and the Congress the political entity that was thought to be the effective instrument for opposing Communist propaganda became known as the NCL, that is, the noncommunist – not the anticommunist – left. Hence, to those accustomed to thinking of the CIA as a most reactionary organization, staffed by the most right-wing Republicans, carrying on the type of anticommunism associated with McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committees, this ideological twist must be a stumbling block to understanding the nature of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The truth is just the reverse of the stock beliefs. Much of the criticism of the Congress, particularly from the American Committee, was that it coddled neutralists and pacifists. Actually, the Congress was a mixed bag. It had its soft and its hard anticommunists (as did the American Committee) as well as those who preferred to be known as noncommunists, and there were many disputes between the two camps. Koestler, for example, left the Congress out of disgust with what he regarded as its politics of accommodation. And the American Committee voted to dissociate from the Congress after the Bertrand Russell incident, during which Diana Trilling led the criticism of Russell, the Chairman of the Congress, for his anti-Americanism. The issues were further complicated by the frequent political shifts of the leading actors and by the contradictions in their positions. Josselson, for instance, was contemptuous of the politics of the American Committee (as was Nabokov) and referred to it as a nuisance, because it questioned the politics of the Congress. At the same time, he criticized *Encounter* for not being politically aggressive enough and wanted it to be less international and more British in its emphasis.

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Of course, there is still the question of who was right, the hard anticommunists or the NCLers – a complex question to answer, that depends on how one's aims are defined. For though a gentler policy would attract more writers, their support would be gained, as Diana Trilling said in one of her letters to the Congress, for a position that might turn out to be politically undesirable and might boomerang.

The central question is that of hidden funding by the CIA. This actually raises several moral, political, and intellectual issues that are seemingly different but interrelated: that of secret funding in general, specific funding by the CIA, the matter of intellectual probity, and the efficacy of such an activity. As for secret funding, it seems to me to violate the very nature of a free intellectual enterprise, particularly when the financing is by a well-organized arm of the government, with its own political agenda. Perhaps political groups are not so compromised. But literary magazines and organizations of writers, in particular, must have their own spontaneous beginnings and must be rooted in an intellectual community in order to be authentic. In addition, they have to make their own mistakes, and not be corrected by an outside agency. The CIA may not be the evil force painted by political propaganda, and it should be assumed that a great power must have an intelligence service. But at best it is clearly not an intellectual enterprise. Moreover, writers' organizations and literary magazines set up in this way are bound to have a limited effectiveness, if only because their origins and lush financing are suspect. True enough, it is very difficult to measure the efficacy of the Congress and its publications. However, all the evidence points to only partial success, especially in the later phases, and one perhaps not commensurate with the money and effort put into it. Magazines such as *Preuves* and *Tempo Presente* had small circulations and apparently little influence. Some of the adherents of the Congress simply constituted a paid bureaucracy. Others, who belonged to a noncommunist left, retained their neutralism, pacifism, and anti-Americanism. As a matter of fact, it is clear that the decisive shift in European intellectual opinion – from fellow-travelling to anticommunism – particularly in France, came as a result of changing political circumstances, and to a large extent as a result of the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

On the question of control by the CIA, it has been claimed that the officers of the Congress and the editors of its publications were free to pursue their own judgements, and that, as Coleman also claims, they were free because their views coincided with those of the CIA. But the fact that they were chosen for this reason by the CIA itself indicated that leaders and policies were not freely selected or arrived at. Coleman cites many instances of what amounted to orders by Josselson and others to the heads of the various

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committees and magazines. Several glaring examples are Josselson's political pressures on Irving Kristol when he edited *Encounter*; the rejection by *Encounter* of Dwight Macdonald's essay critical of America, and Josselson's directive that nothing be reprinted from *National Review*. The latter injunction is especially revealing of the political coloration of the Congress – and the CIA.

But after all these questions have been raised about the operation, a basic one still remains: should the whole thing have taken place? At the time I was critical of it, mainly because it was a bureaucratic enterprise pretending to be an intellectual one. I was particularly put off by a musical event created by transporting the Boston Symphony Orchestra to Paris, at a cost, it was rumored, of a half a million dollars. It was made fun of by the French, who described it as the greatest Parisian couturieres' ball. When I asked Manés Sperber why so much money was wasted on this impressario's dream, which I suspected was inspired by Nabokov, himself a composer, Sperber replied that the Executive Committee, of which he was a member, was told that the money was earmarked for the festival and could not be used for anything else. But to be truthful, I also must indicate that I was opposed to the subsidy of a publication like *Encounter* because it gave it a large edge in competition with *Partisan Review*. On reflection, however, and to a large extent as a result of my other conversations with Sperber, who reminded me of the desperate need for some activities to counter the propaganda of the communists that had swamped Europe and particularly France, I have come to think that some such countermeasure as the Congress, with all its shortcomings and its shady funding, could be justified. (I recall that when I went to Paris in 1949, I felt as though I were in Moscow. Streets and subway stations had Russian names, the largest unions were under communist control, most writers and intellectuals were Soviet sympathizers, and anticommunists like Raymond Aron were treated as pariahs.) Admittedly, open financing would have been preferable. But no foundation was prepared to do this, nor, given the nature of our society and our government, could any official agency have undertaken to finance openly this vast "liberal conspiracy." Congress, which will not support even more clear-cut operations, would never have tolerated expenditures for such a politically and intellectually controversial enterprise. Today the National Endowment for Democracy comes closest to such a political enterprise. But since it is under Congressional supervision, it, too, could not even think of financing an operation that is bound to be criticized by many members of Congress.

Another nagging question is whether those in key positions at the Congress knew or could have known about the role of the CIA, though this issue has more to do with the characters of the people involved and our own

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curiosity about these matters than with the larger problems associated with covert financing. Most of the editors and leaders of the Congress publicly denied knowing about the CIA, although Sidney Hook in his autobiography, *Out of Step*, says the relation was suspected. One incident that was quite typical of the contradictions and ambiguities occurred at a gathering at my house. Ignazio Silone, who had just arrived on a visit to New York, at one point asked me indignantly "who that man with the beard was." "Why do you want to know?" I asked him. "Because," Silone said, "he insulted me. He said, 'Do you know that you work for the CIA?' " "That's Dwight Macdonald," I told him. Perhaps the word *know* is misleading, for by definition support by the CIA is unknowable, since it has to be denied by those in the know. Hence it can be only suspected; and those who denied any definite knowledge of the link to the CIA were telling the literal truth.

So much for what has been known and not known. But the fact that there are some significant errors does raise questions about Coleman's methods of research. I have no way of knowing what other errors there are, but I can cite a few in his references to me and to *Partisan Review*. He says that we received funds from the Congress. This is not only false but probably libelous, since it implies our having received CIA money. Unfortunately, neither the Congress nor the American Committee were concerned with our financial problems. Coleman could have checked this matter with me, but he never asked to interview me, though the list of people he did interview is a long one. Coleman also creates a false impression by not giving a full account of my attempt to challenge some claims made at the conference I attended, in Berlin, about the virtues of mass culture. What happened was that the chairman cut me off when I spoke from the floor in criticism of some remarks several speakers had made. When I asked whether he would let me continue, he said no. Hence I walked out, announcing that I would call a press conference to protest my not being allowed to talk. Eight people, including Mary McCarthy, Stephen Spender, and Robert Oppenheimer, walked out in support of me. However, we all cooled off, and I returned when I was told I would be given a chance to speak my mind, which I was no longer eager to do.

Another error is Coleman's statement that Macdonald resigned from *Partisan Review* because Philip Rahv and I supported the war against Hitler. Actually, Macdonald resigned because he wanted either to take over the magazine or, failing that, to start his own. He proposed that whoever had the money to put out the next issue would have *Partisan Review*, and since he and his wife had private incomes, the odds were against Rahv and myself. But we did come up with the money, and Macdonald founded *Politics*. Coleman also invents a debate in the American Committee, which he describes as

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a "contest between those who, like Shils, Daniel Bell, and Irving Kristol ('conservatives'), defended Western liberal civilization and those who, like Mary McCarthy, William Phillips, and John Kenneth Galbraith ('new Left'), deplored the vulgarity, triviality, and conformism of Americanized 'mass society,' its consumerism, its automobiles, its popular media." This is a fiction. Neither McCarthy, Galbraith, nor I were ever members of the new left. Moreover, I have been accused endlessly of being too conservative, too accepting of American society and the American government. It is true that I have criticized some aspects of American life – who hasn't – but since the late thirties I have not shared the anti-Americanism of many on the left. As for Mary McCarthy, so far as I recall, she never participated in any debates of the American Committee. Like most of us, she was not consistent in her beliefs. Of course there was her ultraleftist stand on Vietnam, but apparently Coleman has not read her essay published in *Commentary* in 1947, "America the Beautiful."

Nevertheless, there seems to be enough substantiated material in the book to enable one to judge the politics and the ethics of the "liberal conspiracy." But any such judgement obviously would reflect our own political experience and bias. Perhaps one criterion is the question I have often asked myself: would I have accepted CIA subvention for *Partisan Review*, either directly or via the Congress for Cultural Freedom? I cannot be certain I would have refused, for to be offered funding for a magazine to which one is committed is a temptation almost too great to resist. It might be said that, as Oscar Wilde remarked in a famous epigram, the only way to have resisted the temptation was to have yielded to it. But if I had accepted, I might now be regretting it – such being the pressures of liberal opinion, as well as my own reservations.

In any event, it is a measure of how much the political situation has changed that now we cannot even conceive of having to make such lasting choices. As for the "liberal conspiracy" which belongs now to an almost forgotten epoch, it surely is ironic that Gorbachev should have been more effective than the Congress for Cultural Freedom was in exposing the false allures of communism – and at no cost to us.

W. P.

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Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

MARY McCARTHY: 1912-1989

I first met Mary McCarthy nearly half a century ago – in the winter of 1940 at dinner at Harry Levin's in Cambridge. She was married to Edmund Wilson. I can remember still how transfixed I was by Mary – so beautiful, so intelligent, so witty, so much fun to talk to, her smile so lustrous and penetrating. I also remember how outraged I was by the marriage of this lovely young woman to a man who, however interesting and distinguished, seemed to me, at the age of twenty-three, infinitely old. In fact, Mary was then twenty-eight and Edmund forty-five – a smaller gap in age than I presently enjoy in my own marriage.

I fell in love with Mary on that winter night; and, when I saw her in recent weeks in the intensive care ward at New York Hospital, embraced by the awful technology of modern medicine, she appeared, for all the tangle of tubes and wires, somehow youthful again, almost as beautiful as when we first met so many years ago. But then she never lost her youthfulness – in the sense of endless delight in the oddities of life, endless curiosity about people and ideas and human predicaments, endless interest in the way things worked, endless passion to learn new things, endless anger over hypocrisy and mendacity and cruelty. Mary never grew old.

Memories crowd in – Mary in New York, in Newport, in Wellfleet, in London, in the charming Paris apartment in the Rue de Rennes, in the lovely house in Castine. One summer in the early 1950s in Wellfleet I used every morning to go over to her farmhouse from our cabin in the woods and write *The Crisis of the Old Order* in a room in her barn. Later she read the manuscript and returned it with a series of acute, indeed rather devastating, criticisms. I remember her remark about the prologue, a portentous account of FDR's first inauguration: "almost Pre-Raphaelite, " she said. She was absolutely correct. This was shortly after Adlai Stevenson's 1952 campaign, and I was writing history as if I were still writing political speeches. Her

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Editor's Note: These remarks were presented at the memorial service for Mary McCarthy, held on November 8th, 1989 at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City.

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comments shifted my whole perspective on the text. I withdrew the manuscript from the publisher and spent a month going over it sentence by sentence and purging it of its flourishes and excesses.

This was typical of Mary – both of her generosity in giving time to her friends and her absolute fidelity to her own exacting standards. As her marvelous essays in autobiography show, she saw her own earlier selves with that same scrupulous objectivity. Of course she changed course from time to time in a vitally engaged life. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all, " she once wrote. " . . . If you start an argument with yourself, that makes two people at least, and when you have two people, one of them starts appeasing the other."

There used to be a fine phrase, now banned, I supposed, in this supersensitive age – "man of letters." "Woman of letters" doesn't sound right; "person of letters" is wholly unacceptable. Whatever the contemporary equivalent of the old phrase, it applied vividly to Mary. She wrote with analytical power, startling clarity, keen human insight, silken wit, dispassionate ruthlessness, on an enviable diversity of subjects: the novel, painting, architecture, opera, theater, politics, manners, tastes, religion, language, museums, universities, Vassar, Venice, Florence, France, America, Vietnam. Her novels, stories and essays constitute a brilliant commentary, interpretation, panorama of our disordered age.

From early childhood, Mary had more than her share of troubles in life. She triumphed over them almost to the end by sheer force of an exceedingly strong will, allied to drastic intelligence, boundless courage and a joyous instinct for living. She faced down the various illnesses that harassed her in recent years with a quite extraordinary absence of complaint and self-pity.

Nothing rejoiced her friends more than the singular felicity of her last marriage. In Jim West she found a perfect companion. I can claim some small credit for bringing them together. After I returned from a trip to the Soviet Union and Poland in 1959, the U.S.I.A. asked me which American writers might be usefully sent to Poland. I urged them to send Mary, and she soon met Jim in the Warsaw Embassy. It was one of the best things I have ever done.

Mary was a sublime mixture of astringency and tenderness. For an intensely liberated woman, she luxuriated in housewifely detail. She was a superb cook, kept an immaculate house and loved being Jim's wife; she generally referred to herself as "Mary West" rather than "Mary McCarthy." She may have cast a cold eye, but she had the warmest of hearts. She was the dearest of friends and the best of company. We will all miss her to the end of our days.

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Raymond Aron

WITHOUT REGRETS

I was lucky enough in my youth to have three friends whose superiority I could not conceal from myself: Jean-Paul Sartre, Eric Weil, and Alexandre Kojève. I had doubts about the first for a few years; Malraux's reaction to *La Légende de la vérité*[1] made me fear that the fertility of his mind and his creative power, obvious by the early 1930s, instead of finding expression in works of genius, would be lost in the interstices between philosophy and literature. Our dialogue, nevertheless, was without difficulty. To be sure, Sartre was right to criticize me for being too afraid of making a fool of myself. Even in the so-called exact sciences, research cannot be accomplished without mistakes, and mistakes are often profitable. He, on the other hand, particularly in politics, made generous use of his right to be wrong.

Eric Weil, whose name is known only to a few thousand people, was exceptionally cultured, almost perfectly so. I argued with him several times about events rather than philosophy. But when our conversations turned to philosophy, I felt almost physically an intellectual force superior to mine, the capacity to go further, deeper, to set up a system. Even then, he knew the great philosophers better than I.

Alexandre Kojève always gave me the feeling that, if I risked expressing an idea, he had already thought of it. If he had not thought of it, he could have. He, too, impressed me by the breadth and depth of his philosophical culture, and his posthumous books confirm this impression. In 1938, he too was mistaken about history in the making; a few months before the invasion of Poland, he did not believe war would come. What did he mean in 1939, when he called himself a strict Stalinist? My familiarity with these

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1. A manuscript rejected by Gallimard, which is soon to be published along with other unpublished works by Sartre.

Editor's Note: This essay is the "Epilogue" in *Memoirs: Fifty Years of Political Reflection* by Raymond Aron, translated by George Holoch, published by Holmes & Meier, New York, NY. Copyright © 1990 Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc.

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three exceptional men, one of whom became a sacred monster while the two others lived in semi-obscurity, protected me from illusions. I never dreamed of measuring myself against the Greats of the past, I was on the contrary happy to quote them, interpret them, continue them. I envied Sartre who, at twenty-five, thought, without a hint of vanity, that Hegel's height was accessible to him; another in the same group, convinced that he would go beyond Max Weber if he devoted himself to economic and social research, left me skeptical; I envied, with a smile, Eric Weil, who seriously told me one day that he was going to bring philosophy to its conclusion. As for the texts of Kojève that would bring to an end, according to him, the cycle of thought and of history themselves, I read them today with the same feelings I had fifty years ago, although those feelings may now be even more ambiguous.

Of course, I was divided between admiration for these extraordinary minds and doubt. But admiration prevented me from aiming too high and, at the same time, from suffering from the distance between my ambitions and my work. A few weeks or a few months after each of my books, I distance myself from them. Perhaps my writer's satisfaction lasted longer with the *Introduction*, *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, *Peace and War*, and *Clausewitz*.

I am not fully satisfied with any of my books. The imperfection of all of them, even with reference to the level to which I aspire, does not weigh too heavily on me, now that the game is definitely up. The *Introduction* needed another year, and less tense, elliptical, constrained writing. Similarly, *Peace and War*, even though I planned the book for more than ten years, was written too quickly; its different parts were unevenly ripe. As for the judgements expressed in England and the United States on the publication of a collection of articles[2], neither the most indulgent nor the harshest changed the idea I had of myself. I do not believe Bernard Crick when he presents me not as a disciple but as an equal of Tocqueville; nor do I feel overcome by a rather harsh judgement from a historian whom I respect, Félix Gilbert.

I would be lying if I said that the judgements others make about me and my work leave me indifferent; that cursed blood clot has not hardened my skin to the point that arrows bounce off it as though it were armor. But my sensitivity, which was excessive in my twenties, has fallen below the normal. I would suffer if I lost the friendship or the esteem of a few people, young or old, who now make up my universe. As for the others, they have the right to bury me. One of the few survivors of my generation, Georges Canguilhem, deserves the peace that he enjoys; his privateness, his modesty, the rare quality of his books reserved for the few, place him outside the bat-

2. *History and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1978).

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tle for prestige or Parisian authority. By accident or out of perversity, I persist in not sinking into silence. I rightly receive blows, since I give them from time to time – as infrequently as possible because, for me, the time for polemics is over. But – who can say why? – I sometimes feel the need to unmask mystifications and to continue a battle that is much larger than I. I will eagerly pass the torch to others.

What makes Raymond Aron run? asked Viansson-Ponté in an article in *Le Monde* devoted to the *Main Currents of Sociological Thought*. What used to make me run was the mission that my father's misfortune had left me as a legacy. Not that that mission imposed on me the search for honors. It is true that my father would have liked to have the *Légion d'honneur*; it would in a sense have compensated him for all the rest, for the true object of his ambition, at which he had failed. I sought neither "honors" nor social success. Pierre Bourdan urged me to sign an application; I remained a chevalier of the *Légion d'honneur* for twenty-eight years, some kind of record; other honors came without my seeking. The witticism attributed to Winston Churchill suits me perfectly: never ask for them, never refuse them, never wear them. As for the dozen honorary doctorates, I had no reason to refuse them; refusal would have been evidence of misplaced pride. Sartre's revolutionary motive for refusing the Nobel Prize has no meaning for me. I was touched by the Goethe Prize of the city of Frankfurt, given to George Lukács three years earlier and to Ernst Jünger three years later.

Perhaps journalism, which did not help me with my university colleagues, brought me to the attention of foreign juries more than I deserved. Without my articles, professors would probably appreciate my books more, and foreign universities would think of me less often. It hardly matters. I gave my parents everything they expected of me; I await my last years with serenity, no longer thinking of their last years with pain.

Have I done the best with the means available to me? Having approached philosophers of the highest level, I knew that I would never be one of them. Of course, if I had returned to the university in 1945, if I had been elected to the Sorbonne in 1947, if I had given up journalism, I would have written other books. To mention the least doubtful example, instead of the three paperback volumes, I would have written a large book, which would have had fewer readers, but would have better answered to my aspirations toward rigor. I regret this volume, which would have been comparable to the *Introduction* or to *Penser la guerre*. My work as an analyst and a militant in the service of freedom compensates for these losses.

What are the books I regret not having written? Some readers will probably reply: a book on Marx. I would agree with this widespread assumption only with some hesitation. Marxism that has become Marxism-

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Leninism is of no interest to any serious person, to any scholar. To adopt an expression of my friend Jon Elster, under what conditions can one be simultaneously a Marxist-Leninist, intelligent, and honest? One can be a Marxist-Leninist and intelligent, but in that case one is not (intellectually) honest. There is no lack of sincere Marxist-Leninists, but they lack intelligence. Elster is writing a book that attempts to "make sense of Marx"; not an intellectual biography but an interpretation of Marxism, derived from the texts, which will, so to speak, sum up the Marxism that is valid, or at least usable today.

My project is, or was a few years ago, entirely different: to clarify the basic philosophical speculations of the young Marx, to grasp the broad outlines of economics as he presents them in the *Critique*, the *Grundrisse*, and *Capital*, and to derive from these two parts the various possible Marxes and the characteristics of the prophet-revolutionary. I doubt that I still have the time to write this essay, sketched in my 1976-77 lecture course at the Collège de France. It would fill an empty space in the body of my writings. But, all things considered, the loss does not seem to me to be serious, even for me.

As I write, a new Marxological dispute is developing. It has been provoked by the sudden interest that British analytic philosophers have taken in the Marxist philosophy of history. They are reconsidering the celebrated text of the *Preface* to *Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*, the text that contained, according to Marx himself, the essentials of his conception of history, a text that the Marxists of the Second International had endlessly analyzed, and that Lukács, and following him, the existentialists, had despised. On the other hand, the economic works, written between the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, have not yet been published. Understanding of the totality of Marx's economic thought would require many years of Marxology. Specialists are aware of an economist named Marx, richer, more subtle, and more interesting than the author only of *Capital*. But the useful Marx, so to speak, the one who may have changed the history of the world, is the one who propagated false ideas; the rate of surplus value that he suggests leads to the conclusion that nationalization of the means of production would allow recovery for the workers of enormous qualities of value seized by the possessors of the means of production; socialism, or at least communism, eliminates the category of "the economic" and the dismal science itself. As an economist, Marx remains perhaps the richest, the most exciting of his time. As an economist-prophet, as a putative ancestor of Marxism-Leninism, he is an accursed sophist who bears some responsibility for the horrors of the twentieth century.

I should also regret the development foreseen in the *Introduction* and in *History and the Dialectic of Violence*. Discussion of books by analysts no longer excites me very much. The two controversies that have produced the

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most verbiage, the so-called Hempel-Dray controversy, and the one concerned with the nature (or reality) of "social facts," seem to me somehow exhausted. I have referred several times to the former. It has to do with the dispute between *explanation* and *understanding*. On the one hand, historical explanation, patterned after the ideal type of scientific explanation, requires one or more general propositions from which one can deduce particular consequences. This scheme can often be found, not fully explicit, in the writings of sociological historians. But when there is a question of one decision, one man in a unique situation, the historian illuminates the decision through the logic of the situation along with the character of the agent. To understand Hitler's decision to attack the Soviet Union in June 1941 on the basis of his ambitions and his personality seems both easy and uncertain; to explain it as one would explain an embolism, a storm, or an earthquake seems to me logically and existentially mistaken.

The second controversy is of more interest to me. It has to do with societal facts, not to be confused with social facts. Can a postal system, a railway system, a church be assimilated to an entity, or simply to a subject capable of making decisions and of being characterized by adjectives, like a person? It is a subtle, complex, and perhaps inexhaustible controversy. A postal system or, in an archaic society, the system of reciprocal gifts, is not Peter or Paul, a human individual, a being of flesh and feeling. A "societal fact" includes individuals, stabilized, ritualized, or organized relations, behaviors that assure the permanence of the system. Does this system act and organize in the same way as an individual? I am tempted to answer, along with one of the most penetrating analysts, yes and no, or else yes or no, as you like. The various groupings that make up a society, narrow and archaic, or broad and modern, exist; the sociologist does not create them by observing them, but they do not exist in the same manner as a biologically delimited and particularized individual. In these "societal facts," a number of individuals are obviously interchangeable; a substitute mail carrier fulfills the same function as the regular one on vacation.

These analyses fascinate me, even though they seem to me to be rather frustrating. They are connected to the debate over methodological individualism[3] as well as to that over holism.[4] I would have liked to clarify

3. Methodological individualism consists in asserting that in the last analysis all social facts result from individual behaviors and that all explanations, in the social sciences, ought to go back to those individual behaviors.

4. This name has been given to the theory of totalities or of groups that cannot be reduced to the elements they contain.

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my scattered remarks on social groups, the *Zusammenhänge* in Dilthey's expression, within which we are all integrated.

The debate, which is certainly not new, can already be found, with a different vocabulary, at the center of the dialogue between Durkheim and Tarde, between those whom Karl Popper calls *holists* and the proponents of methodological individualism (Hayek, for example). It takes another form when sociologists present society functioning by itself, with individuals as nothing but cogs, prisoners of an inflexible determinism. The courses I presented at the Collège de France tended to clarify both the nature of social groups and of the modalities of explanation, individualist or holist.

At the same time, I would have extended the *Introduction* and *History and the Dialectic of Violence*. When a sociologist studies the *functioning* of a society (or of a sector of a society), he immobilizes, so to speak, his object; he does not remove it from the process of development, but he grasps it at a particular moment. The more his attention is fixed on an immobilized phenomenon for methodological reasons, the less he is concerned with imperceptible changes affecting it or, on occasion, suddenly transforming it. I would have liked to connect system and history with one another. In *The Imperial Republic*, I pointed out the relative independence of international political relations from the world market rather than the connections between the two. Perhaps the scholarly and academic career of each individual is largely determined by social circumstances that constrain individuals. But whoever has lived in the century of Hitler and Stalin must be permanently blind to history if he denies the role of "heroes" and sees only the unfolding of a global, inflexible, and predictable determinism, where his contemporaries hear the sound, see the fury, and seek the meaning.

In our age of economy and of war, I should have – and perhaps I still will – sketched the equivalent of Spengler's *Jahre der Entscheidung*, or rather sketch out a skeptical philosophy of history for the end of the twentieth century. The two great wars of the century, the first preparing the way for the second, were leading to a third. This apparently logical sequence was interrupted by the technical innovation of nuclear weapons. Perhaps the great powers will never use these weapons against one another, because probable destruction so far exceeds the possible benefits of a victory.

Enough regrets. Assuming that someone takes the trouble to read me in the future, he will discover the analyses, aspirations, and doubts that filled the consciousness of a man who was impregnated by history: a French citizen, but a Jew whom a semifree French government had excluded from his country through a statute based on racial criteria; a citizen of a France that was a member of the European Community, one of the four centers of world science and the world economy, incapable of defending itself, hesitating be-

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tween American protection and the Soviet peace that Moscow offered at the price of freedom; a Europe that was more liberal and libertarian than ever before, and tormented by a rebellion against the constraints of industrial society; a Europe that was perhaps decadent, because civilizations flourish in freedom and decay in unbelief; a Europe within a humanity that, despite the decline in economic growth between now and the end of the century, is condemned to the expansion of science and production.

More than these uncompleted tasks, I often regret that I did not deepen the question the *Introduction* formulated without providing an answer: What is the status of historicism? Are we prisoners of a system of beliefs that we internalize at a very early age and that governs our distinction between good and evil? Is the civilization that the West is spreading throughout the world worth more than the cultures it is stifling, flattening, and has more than once condemned to death? In a certain sense, I have remained a man of the Enlightenment. Of course, I do not eliminate with a word – superstition – the dogmas of the churches. I often sympathize with the Catholics, loyal to their faith, who demonstrate a total freedom of thought in all profound matters. The horror of secular religions makes me feel some sympathy for transcendent religions.

Do secular religions differ in nature from social beliefs in general? Our society constantly teaches us to judge men, actions, books; secular religions lay claim to a monopoly of ultimate values. In my view, they are a sign of regression in comparison to the differentiation of orders, ideas, systems. The West, at least in part, owes to the duality of powers, spiritual and temporal, its greatness and fecundity; in the Soviet Union, pseudo-believers maintain a pseudo-religion, a so-called social truth that would bring together and assume leadership over secondary truths. For Western Europeans, the establishment of Marxism-Leninism as the truth of the state would mean more than a regression, it would be an abdication. The West lives and survives only through pluralism.

Marxism-Leninism can accurately be called a superstition in the full sense of the term. The dogmas of salvationist religions avoid refutation because they assert realities or truths that, by their very nature, are inaccessible to investigation conducted according to the rules of rational knowledge. On the other hand a dogmatism that lays claim to ultimate truth in an area susceptible to scientific analysis is subject to criticism.

I profess the systematic anticommunism that has been attributed to me with a clear conscience. Communism is no less hateful to me than Nazism was. The argument that I used more than once to distinguish class messianism from race messianism no longer impresses me very much. The apparent universality of the former has become, in the last analysis, an illusion. Once a

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class-based organization has come to power, it becomes involved with a national or imperial messianism. It sanctifies conflicts or wars rather than preserving, across frontiers, the fragile links of a common faith.

Intellectual or spiritual pluralism does not lay claim to a truth comparable to those of mathematics or physics; nor does it fall back to the level of ordinary opinion. It is rooted in the tradition of our culture; it is justified, and to some degree verified, by the falseness of beliefs that attempt to deny it. Iranian Shiites and Marxist-Leninists belong to the same family, since the Shiite clergy wants to rule over civil society as the Soviet Communist Party does. The Westerner is superior to the devotees of Khomeini or Lenin because he knows the difference between scientific truths, however provisional they may be, and religious beliefs, because he challenges himself, aware that our culture, in certain respects, is one among many. The refusal of doubt may strengthen the order of fighters, but it excludes pacification. The imam Khomeini, like the Marxist-Leninists, reminds us that "active faith" leads, even now, to a crusade. Contemporary Westerners, aware of the legitimate plurality of moral authorities, aware of the particularity of our culture, are the only ones who show the way toward a history that would have some meaning.

The secularization of politics leads logically to pluralism. Not that competition among parties can be placed on the same level as spiritual pluralism. What now seems to me implied by the exhaustion of inherited certainties is the questioning of the social order and the political system. It would be unreasonable to assert that it would be better to have a society subjected to permanent challenge than a society held together by uniformly shared convictions (better for whom?). I would say that political challenges are a necessary consequence of religious challenges. But political challenges are either repressed, suppressed, or stifled by varied levels of violence and manipulation; or else they are tolerated or organized with a view toward establishing a mode of government.

It is nevertheless true that the regimes I have called constitutional-pluralist can always be called the best or the only good ones, destined to be spread throughout the world. They correspond to the mental state of those whom Auguste Comte would have called the avant-garde of humanity. The right of everyone to participate in the political dialogue about the common fate flows from the abandonment of absolute truths, but certain societies cannot grant this right without dissolving.

Democracy, in classical philosophy, required citizens, virtuous citizens, that is, to be respectful of the Laws. Democracy in industrial societies establishes conflicts between producers and consumers, interest groups and political parties. The power that comes out of these inevitable rivalries, and which is

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limited by them, always risks decline, risks misunderstanding the demands of collective security.

It is convenient to argue that man preferred, and would still prefer, a sovereign separated from those who resemble him by the past that he embodies and the feeling that his subjects, in the course of centuries, have learned to offer to him. If one coldly compares the advantages and defects among various regimes, while considering all theoretically possible regimes, I do not know whether I would grant the first rank to the democracies of Europe or America. But what other system in the West could enjoy legitimacy? One-party states, in this view, would last only through scarcely veiled violence, and through the sullen resignation of the population. The countries of Eastern Europe provide us with a demonstration of that fact.

Even in politics, the debate over historicism retains an abstract, almost artificial character. If one raises the question of whether one should deplore the fact that humanity did not cease its development with neolithic societies or the Greek city-states, the answer seems to me impossible and the question devoid of meaning. The animal-man was programmed by his genetic inheritance for cultural evolution. At the various stages of this evolution, the organization of life in common took on various forms. This diversity in itself does not pose a problem. What does create a problem, in the eyes of "historicists," is that evil in one place becomes good in another. Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, falsehood on the other.

Sociologists proclaim the diversity of languages and customs, the wealth of diverse human expressions. In the name of what value, according to what criteria can we choose among these "societies," giving each one a place at a particular level of the hierarchy, considering one of them as the best or as exemplary? In the same vein, Max Weber said: Which of the two cultures, French and German, is superior to the other? I reply: Why pose the question? To choose between them? Or to place one above the other?

It is true that diversity risks leading us into skepticism, if good and evil are reversed from one society to another. I do not at all think that this is true. Honesty, frankness, generosity, gentleness, and friendship do not change signs from one century to the next, from one continent to another, or by crossing borders. Of course, the same conduct can be considered aggressive in one group and healthily competitive in another. Neither behavior nor success is appreciated everywhere according to the same criteria. Within a particular society, there is no single image of the exemplary man. The knight, the priest, the intellectual do not aspire to the same kind of excellence. Everything that depends on culture, as ethnologists have defined it, is outside universalistic judgement. Anyone who would formulate such a judgement would necessarily belong to one of those cultures. There is no observer

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above the fray.

To some extent, the multiplicity of cultures resembles the multiplicity of arts: we should appreciate the diversity, not deplore the anarchy. We Westerners are, so to speak, in the soup. More than anyone else, we have become aware of this diversity, and we simultaneously aspire to universal truths or values. A contradiction that troubles, tears apart our historical consciousness, but which we are not unable to overcome, or at least to withstand.

Should we curse the Roman conquest of Gaul or celebrate it as the origin of France? Everyone will answer this question according to his feelings and his knowledge. A historical judgement of this kind should be left to the scholars, if they have the taste for it, to polemicists, or even to a philosopher like Fichte, possessed by the demon of propaganda. These historical judgements trouble us only when they become political judgements.

In our time, millions of people are living through and suffering from the acute contradiction between a culture that is dying and a culture that they simultaneously hate and desire because it offers the path to power and opulence. Nearly a half-century ago, I wrote that the West no longer knows whether or not it prefers what it contributes to what it destroys. Deprived of their empires, the Europeans no longer have the same responsibilities; they may still be committing ethnocide, but they do so less through their actions than through their very nature. The history of humanity is strewn with dead cultures, sometimes even cultures that have vanished in living memory.

History was tragic for the Indians, the Incas, the Aztecs. Who can doubt it? It tramples on the corpses of cultures as it tramples on the corpses of men. What is it leading to? Will what comes tomorrow even justify the suffering of those who fell along the way? Here too, no one can answer. Today, in this century, we have been freed from the provincialism characteristic of all past cultures, freed from naive progressivism, and also from facile relativism. The truth of science, recognition of the dignity of all, nobles and commoners, form the basis of our convictions. The events of the century have dissipated our illusions: the progress of science is no guarantee of the progress of men or societies. The horrors of the regimes of Hitler and Stalin, contrary to current opinion, tear us away from a coarse form of progressivism. We know that everything, including the worst, is possible, but also that the worst is not morally indistinguishable from the acceptable.

By means of this approach, I would have arrived at a more thoroughly developed theory of "historical consciousness in thought and action."[5] How

5. A title I gave to two series of lectures in Aberdeen, the "Gifford Lectures."

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can one reconcile in thought the right of all cultures to exist and resolute adherence to one's own culture? How can I reconcile in practice my belonging to the nation of which I am a citizen and my loyalty to my Jewish ancestors? How can I accept the possibility of the use of nuclear arms against cities, in other words the annihilation of millions of innocent people? Could I fully accept the last sentence of the *Introduction*: "Human existence is dialectical, that is, dramatic, since it operates in an incoherent world, commits itself regardless of its duration, seeks a fleeting truth, with no assurance but that provided by a fragmentary science and formal thought"?

I would make a sharper distinction between social values and moral virtues, I would strengthen the foundations of scientific truth and human universalism. As for action, I would describe our historical condition more concretely, but not in fundamentally different terms. In quiet periods, within modern democratic societies, the citizen has few occasions to live through the terrors of adventurous decisions. When we hesitate between American and Soviet protection, we are involved in an incoherent world, we choose one social configuration against another, both of which are imperfect, and we resign ourselves to a possible horror that we should perhaps reject absolutely.

About fifty years ago, I wrote that our historical condition was dramatic. Should we say dramatic or tragic? In some respects, tragic is more appropriate than dramatic. Tragic is the necessity to establish security on the basis of the nuclear threat; tragic, the choice between the accumulation of conventional weapons and the nuclear threat; tragic, the destruction of old cultures by industrial civilization, but tragedy would be the final judgement only if a fortunate conclusion, beyond tragedy, was not even conceivable. I continue to think a happy end possible, far beyond the political horizon, an Idea of Reason.[6]

Have I felt regret for not having been the Kissinger of a Prince, as some have suggested, notably Jean d'Ormesson? I would answer them in a friendly way that they are wrong. Roger Martin du Gard, in his still unpublished memoirs, sketches an excessively flattering portrait of me, and explains why I "will not rule."[7]

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6. In Kant's sense.

7. "Reading the works of Raymond Aron, one's first feeling of agreement is so strong that one would like to grant him absolute power and allow him to conduct affairs of state. He is the 'good dictator,' secretly desired since the death of Solon. But I imagine him in power. He is much too intelligent to govern! Not only would his intelligence disarm him in the face of his adversaries and oblige him to understand opposition too well to brush it aside or to

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As for me, I think that I simply never possessed the qualities necessary to exercise power, even at the level of an advisor. Prudent in my writings, I have difficulty in controlling my speech. I allow myself to express extreme ideas, to respond to circumstances or to express moods which do not represent my deepest thoughts and risk discrediting them. A political man has to hold his tongue as well as his pen. I am not incapable of adapting my words to my audience, but diplomatic language is painful to me. I like to speak without weighing my words, and even the most trivial lie costs me an effort: I lack imagination in refusing a dinner invitation or a request for a lecture.

There is more. I never claimed to have the competence of a professional economist. To be sure, most finance ministers themselves do not have the competence of those who teach or administer the economy. Why should a minister, if he were seeking an advisor outside the administration, choose a man like me, on the periphery of all disciplines, a free spirit inclined toward passions that are hardly compatible with the duties of advisor?

The case of Henry Kissinger obsesses commentators, because of my relations with him and his feelings toward me, which he expresses freely, even in my absence. My grandchildren will proudly preserve the copy of his *Memoirs* with the inscription: "To my teacher" (unless historians remove Kissinger from his pedestal and I share with him in the fickleness of fate). Presiding over the National Security Council in Washington, informing the President of the United States every morning about the state of the world, negotiating for him in Peking or Moscow – such a role would have fascinated me if I had been an American citizen. All the more so because Bundy, Rostow, Kissinger, and Brzezinski, professors at Harvard or MIT, whose status was comparable to mine, acceded to the post without an electoral campaign, without laying siege to the Prince. Of course, as an American citizen, I would have sought the experience of power, but I would – I hope – have understood in time that I did not have the stuff of a Kissinger.

Intelligence, knowledge, and judgement are not enough. Performance is also required, of which I would most probably have been incapable: to impose oneself in the jungle of Washington disputes, personal and political, to seduce the press or at least avoid its hostility, to make or inspire often necessary decisions that send young men into battle and death. Not that I reject the use of force, in theory or in practice. But it is one thing to agree abstractly to the recourse to arms, and another to convince the president here and now to take that step. My scrupulous nature and my hatred of violence would have told against me in the post occupied by an exceptional intellectual

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combat it. . . ." The text is dated "summer 1957." Roger was probably thinking in particular of my positions on Algeria.

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like Kissinger.

Enough of these confessions about the unreal. Let us imagine a position in France comparable to that of advisor for diplomacy and defense. None of the presidents of the Fifth Republic has needed such an advisor, and none of them would have accepted him. And the position would not have been very exciting. A substantial part of General de Gaulle's diplomacy did not go beyond stage management. What remains from his journeys to Latin America, Rumania, or Poland, but the memory of acclaim? A few of his decisions remain: leaving the integrated command of NATO, attempting and failing at a Franco-German alliance designed to remove the two countries from "American hegemony," reestablishing relations with Moscow (neither understanding nor cooperation followed from this détente). Since then, French diplomacy has been composed of two aspects: permanent negotiations with our partners in the European Community and action in the rest of the world.

In Africa, France is attempting to preserve its sphere of influence, to maintain its links with Francophone countries. From time to time, crises arise, in Chad, the Central African Republic, Kinshasa. Decisions, correct or not, require neither clairvoyance nor uncommon courage. In the Near East, French diplomacy has hardly gone beyond declarations, for lack of the means necessary to have a direct effect on events. France is absent from no part of the world but, even though the presidents of the Fifth Republic, like American presidents, act as their own foreign ministers, they delude themselves. Since the death of the General, except for Britain's entry into the European Community, French diplomacy has remained in the same groove. This is not what gives France its place in the world; it is the French themselves, the quality of their work and of their culture.

I envisaged neither a ministry, nor an ambassadorship, even less a seat on the Conseil Constitutionnel, which was offered to me. What made me run and still occasionally awakens in me anxiety and hope is the question that I constantly asked myself: Did my teaching have some value for the young people who listened to me? Did the teaching contained in my articles serve my country, the instruction of my readers, the reputation of French journalism outside France? Did I serve some function for the thirty years during which, in all circumstances, I wrote at least an article each month?

During my dozen years at the Sorbonne, I felt little concern about the influence I might have. I brought to my students, Marxist or not, the theory of industrial society, the political philosophy of Spinoza, the sociological interpretation of Montesquieu, the study of international relations. This teaching may not have had the same value, in some respects, as the teaching of a specialist in questionnaires would have had for the few destined for careers as sociologists. But, given the student public in those years of transition be-

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tween the Sorbonne of my youth and the Sorbonne that exploded in 1968, a more traditional professor, more prosaically and rigorously following the path from analysis to sociological explanation, would have done no better than I. Better for some, worse for most. Professionals emphasize technical training of sociologists all the more because they know its limits and, in the last analysis, its facile quality.

The question I asked myself more than once has to do with the moral or political content of my teaching, understood in the broadest sense. I have alluded to my contacts with the students of the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Saint-Cloud. A few months ago, in 1982, when this book was almost finished, I received from a former student at that school a few pages of a little book that he did not intend to publish, a book of memoirs in which I appear.

> Here we are in the twilight of a curtained hall of the Sorbonne, for a meeting of the *Société française de philosophie* chaired by an Olympian Léon Brunschvieg, with an enormous forehead and a gaze that seems to penetrate beneath appearances. Raymond Aron – in an awkward body, with a face like a mask: elephant ears, prominent nose, a mouth both ironic and bitter – has just made a presentation, with cool detachment, on relativity in history, the fragility of democracy, the uncertainty of the future of humanity, views that provoke the massive Victor Basch. Basch, his whole body trembling, proclaims with a tribune's voice his unshakable conviction: freedom was born in Greece, it has constantly enlightened man in his progress, it is a light that will never go out; it will carry the day. His interlocutor replies with cold courtesy that nothing is determined in advance, that nothing is definitively established, that at most one might consider (but this concession is made grudgingly, almost wearily) that in the very long term, perhaps, reason and morality might win out through their coherence, more effective and more solid than passion and violence. . . . It is obviously Raymond Aron who is right.[8]

8. I showed the portrait I have quoted to another former student of Saint-Cloud. This other "Cloutard," who has since become a university professor, had attended neither my thesis defense nor the session of the *Société française de philosophie*, but he remembered me as a professor. He wrote: "At Saint-Cloud, before, during, and after classes, your features and your attitude were what they were but with something more that is missing from this portrait, your smile, your kindness, your good humor. It is true that you did not go to the *Société de philosophie* to be nice, but to defend your convictions. The fact remains that if I accept the 'ironic' mouth, I strongly challenge the bitter mouth. I have trouble finding an appropriate

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The session of the *Société française de philosophie* described here took place in June 1939. I have referred to it myself with mixed feelings. Of course I was right: the uncertainty of the future, the threat of war, the fragility of democracy. Victor Basch was living his faith, serene despite the gathering storm. And he was assassinated – because he was a Jew, because he believed in all the values that the Nazis and their French disciples wanted to destroy.

The "Cloutard" reports his memories of his philosophy professors:

> We took the courses of the two professors jointly charged with teaching philosophy at the school, both Jews, but as dissimilar as possible. The conscientious Dreyfus-Lefoyer was always there; his course, which was thorough, even exhaustive, without challenge and without surprise, left us indifferent. The course of the relaxed Raymond Aron in which, completely outside the official program, he provided us with his reflections on the philosophers of history, from Machiavelli to Sorel and Pareto, with Hobbes along the way, was provocative and impressive. To idealist optimism, he contrasted the practice of political actors, whether or not concealed by speech – the *Realpolitik* of Bismarck that had inspired Hitler. He had just spent several years in Germany, when he had been able to observe the rise of Nazism that he obviously abhorred, while it fascinated him. He had been a socialist and had developed a deep understanding of Marx. He appreciated in Marx the rigorous economic critic, but he rejected the Manichaean prophetic stance, the source of unappealable condemnations. In the name of lucidity and realism, he cut through illusions. I did not want to give up my faith, but I recognized the power of his views. While we all wanted to continue to live in the nineteenth century, just as sunlight dissolves fog, his rigor did away with its myths, and we all found ourselves unarmed and naked on the edge of the abyss. We might almost have held it against him, as though he were the one who had led us there. And in fact, denouncing the Nazi danger that carried with it the threat of war, he was frightening at the same time, emptying the revolutionary credo of all hope, he was demobilizing....

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replacement for the word, but I never saw any bitterness on your ironic (but not always) mouth even when the Sorbonne chose Gurvitch over you, an evening when I happened to be visiting; I saw, to be truthful and you will forgive me, occasional sadness, but there was good reason for that." This second student became a friend in the prewar years; I was not the same for those who listened from a distance as for a friend who visited us in the little house where I was finishing my thesis and with whom I discussed *Esprit*.

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It was not I who was frightening but the world as it appeared to me between 1935 and 1939, and as it was, as we know today. I was never cold, but I often gave that impression. Why? Because of my reticence? Because I maintained distinctions between teaching and friendship? Because I followed Spinoza's advice "not to ridicule human actions, not to deplore them or curse them, but to understand them"? Some or all of this was true, probably in addition to something else that was more mysterious. The statements I made when young, in the course of the 1930s, may have expressed a kind of intellectual delight, the awareness of having dissipated clouds and come close to the truth. If nostalgia for the beliefs I was attacking had been perceptible beneath my negations, my voice might not have been made cold by analysis but warmed by the rebellion, futile as it may have been, of consciousness against reality.

When I wrote *La tragédie algérienne*, François Mauriac came up with the same adjective as my student at Saint-Cloud. Why? A choice had to be made between war and peace, between the preservation of French sovereignty and the Algerians' right to independence; this dilemma had to be presented *mercilessly*. The analysis was neither warm nor cold, but it was either true or false. To be fair, on another occasion, François Mauriac thanked me with a warm letter for a lecture I delivered to several hundred Catholic students.

There remains the serious accusation that I was demobilizing. Was this true throughout my life? This should not be true, since I have not devoted myself exclusively to the austere task of science. I may have been demobilizing for my students at Saint-Cloud between 1935 and 1939.[9] But what opportunity did I have to do better? Fauconnet left me the choice between "desperate or Satanic"; the "Cloutard" and his friends considered me terrifying. I shook their certainties, I revealed to them the mortal danger that was upon us. I argued for a democracy which, even in its decrepitude, was better than the totalitarian regimes. "We are fighting for *Paris-soir* against the *Völkischer Beobachter*," Jean Cavaillès said one day, not in despair, but mockingly, and he was one of the purest heroes of the Resistance. I did not open for my listeners the path to revolutionary salvation. Was I wrong, when salvation bore the name of Stalin?

Have I been "demobilizing" since the war? It was indeed necessary to demobilize the believers, militants, fellow travellers of Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev. I devoted a good deal of time to this operation for mental health. Facts and fashions, not my arguments, have now tended to discredit the revolutionary hope that communism claims to embody. But, although the

9. Not for all of them, particularly not for the Catholics.

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"Cloutard" in the 1930s could legitimately ask: "What can I hold on to?" Michel Contat does not have the right to pose the same question in 1982. Since the last war, the Western democracies have accomplished progress that those who hold them in contempt considered impossible: economic growth, personal freedom, the improvement of social relations. Who propagated "deadly" teaching, those who sought Mecca in turn in Moscow, Belgrade, Peking, and Havana, or those who, freed from soteriological beliefs, worked as hard as they could for prosperity and for the reform of liberal regimes, the least bad of our civilization, perhaps the least bad in history?

The critique of secular religions contained in itself certain affirmations, a broad position that some would attack as conformist. I accept the basic characteristics of established democratic and liberal regimes. In the *Essay on Freedom*, for which I have a certain affection, I attempted to set forth the necessary synthesis of two forms of freedom: the realm of autonomy left to individuals and the means that the state offers to the most deprived so that they might exercise their acknowledged rights. Modern democracies ignore neither freedom of choice nor freedom as capacity, the former assured by limitations on the state, the latter by social legislation. At their best moments, Western societies seem to me to have accomplished an exemplary compromise.

Nowadays, the dominant thinkers would not dream of calling me "Satanic or desperate." They would be more likely to denounce me as a conservative, indifferent to inequalities among individuals and nations, resigned to regimes of which no one, unless he is blind, can ignore the imperfections, if not the basic flaws. The rich and the poor still exist, along with the powerful and the humble. No "sociodicy" could justify our regimes any more than theodicies ever justified the Creator. Those who place equality above all, above freedom, criticize me for the small space I have devoted, in my books and articles, to the "scandals" of inequality.

I often discussed inequality in my Sorbonne lectures. One year, I devoted two hours a week to the theme. I never produced material for publication because my attempts left me so unsatisfied.

I am with all my heart egalitarian in the moral sense of the term: I loathe the too frequent social relations in which status hierarchy stifles the sense of fraternity. It is a legacy of salvationist religions, of the equality of everyone before God? The arrogance or authoritarianism toward their students of a number of my colleagues, often on the left, shocks me. But, beyond these feelings, I confess that I do not know what is implied by social justice, nor what distribution of income, wealth, prestige, or power would meet the requirements of equity. Legal philosophers in the United States have been discussing the theme for several years. They are inclined to recommend the

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greatest equality compatible with the preservation of freedom. However brilliant these speculations may be, they neither suppress the obviousness of certain judgements on particular cases, nor the uncertainty about society as a whole.

Outside a society that is egalitarian in every respect, which is impossible in the absence of total despotism, the distribution of social goods follows no simple principle. Negative judgements are easier to make than positive ones. The advantages, monetary and otherwise, enjoyed by certain groups, professions, or individuals, are neither justified in themselves nor in comparison with those of other groups, professions, or individuals. It is easier to condemn an unjust situation than to define the notion of justice that should govern society as a whole. For every profession, in the abstract, one should take into account the cost of training, the painfulness of the work, the contribution to the common good, its effectiveness, without considering the moral value of each individual. On the basis of these considerations no one, not even the most sophisticated computational analyst, could give a categorical answer. The distribution of individuals in jobs is largely a matter of chance. The one who has not succeeded can blame fate and avoid his own responsibilities.

Everyone who wrote about politics out of a concern for truth was in some sense a demystifier. In an age dominated by the ideas of liberty and equality, sociologists belong more than ever to the school of suspicion. Thy do not take at face value the language that social actors use about themselves. The boldest or most pessimistic, no longer possessing an image or a hope of the good society, consider their own with merciless severity. The very society that proclaims equality of opportunity transmits, from generation to generation, its structure, its classes, its hierarchy; the members of these classes change over time, but familial continuity wins out. By means of their diplomas, the heirs add an extra component in their legitimacy.

Sociologists have formed diverse images of our liberal societies on the basis of the same facts. It is not surprising that the children of favored families have more chance of succeeding than the child of an industrial or agricultural worker. The more the educational system puts all students together in the same schools, hence in apparent conditions of equality, the more equality of opportunity appears out of reach. The illusions of the single school have vanished; but should we be indignant because opportunities are unequal, or congratulate ourselves because there are opportunities for many, if not for all?

Liberal society, like every society, "socializes" the young, inculcates in them certain values, a sense of good and evil. In this sense, those who have power, who lord it over others, also impose their symbols. Is it scandalous that the moral authority of the laws of the state strengthens, by legitimating

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it, the domination of the ruling class? Or else, should we marvel at the freedom of choice that the West, unbelieving and perhaps decadent, leaves to everyone? Scientific culture, universalist by nature, now holds the principal place in the education of the young. And the values propagated by the educational system tend to invite criticism of, rather than respect for, the established order.

Marxism no longer plays the role of crushing democratic-liberal regimes under the utopia of the classless society or the example of Soviet reality. It may help to foster a kind of nihilism. By insisting on the arbitrary nature of values and the inequality of interpersonal relations in communities that are, in relative terms, the least tyrannical, one ends up by not recognizing the most obvious facts: although modern society reproduces itself – it would not be a society if it did not reproduce itself – it is changing more rapidly than all past societies. And the liberal order remains different from the tyrannical order offered to us by the Soviet Union. Whoever sees only a difference in degree between the ideology of the state in Moscow and "symbolic violence" in Paris, blinded by "sociologism," finally obscures the fundamental questions of the century.

The philosophers of history who have adopted Toynbee's perspective assert that Europe will recover its strength only through faith, Christianity or even, specifically, Catholicism. I declare myself incompetent on the question. If I were a believer, Jewish or Christian, I would attempt to propagate my faith or my truth. Since I am not a believer of any church, I leave the space of transcendental faith empty, and I personally adhere to the faith of the philosopher, doubt rather than negation. The many attempts to establish harmony between Christian dogma and contemporary cosmologies may, without corresponding, coexist without contradicting one another. Science will never produce anything comparable to the Covenant of the Jewish people or the Revelation of Christ.

The sociology of religion methodologically abstracts from the supernatural dimension. Can it answer the question of whether the twenty-first century will be religious? Is a revival of the Catholic Church probable, and what form will it take? Will it move in the direction of the traditionalists or of the liberation theologians? I do not feel capable of deciding. I believe more in a Catholicism that preaches the salvation of each individual soul than in a Church as auxiliary of revolutionary movements (although in Latin America, the second possibility seems to me in some cases to be almost inevitable).

By leaving out of account traditional churches and concentrating my

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attention on secular religions did I miss the essential point? Was I wrong or unlucky in taking economics and war as subjects of reflection, as the principal phenomena of our time? I have just proposed a choice between error and bad luck. In fact, how could I have chosen otherwise? When I reached historical consciousness, the Great Depression was exacerbating German nationalism, driving Hitler to power, and Europe toward catastrophe. Marxism in power in Moscow, an antiproletarian revolution in Berlin, those are the events that dictated the direction of my research. I wanted to become the contemporary historian of those revolutions and those wars.

Bad luck. Did the inspiration I found in German historicism, in Karl Marx and Max Weber, turn me away from the right path, that of Durkheim and Tarde? Does my generation, "polluted" by German ideas, which Jean-Paul Sartre transfigured with incomparable brilliance, already belong to the past? This may be true, and I feel no bitterness about it. The best sociologists, however, use both Marx and Weber, both purified of their political passions, which conceal their complementary character from the scientific point of view.

Personally, I do not think that my passage through German culture, followed by my study of Anglo-American analytic philosophy, turned me away from France. Before 1939, Germany was our fate. Until the defeat of the Third Reich in 1945, ideas that had come from Germany had penetrated world history. Racism belonged no more to Germany than to other European countries, but Hegel, Marx, and their epigones, Nietzsche and his critique of ideologies, informed, illustrated, shed light on the great conflicts for world domination.

After the twilight of the Germanic gods, American-style democracy, pragmatic, without metaphysics, in search of semantic rigor, confronted nothing but a bastardized version of the Hegelian-Marxist tradition. The technicization of the planet was stimulated with a new impulse. Marxist myths finally dissipated almost by themselves, in the light of the facts. Even the change in the economic climate since 1973 (or perhaps a few years earlier) has not renewed perspectives on the future of humanity.

I see few reasons for optimism when I look at the present. The Europeans are in the process of committing suicide by means of their low birthrate. Peoples that do not reproduce themselves are condemned to growing old, and are therefore haunted by the state of mind of abdication, a "*fin de siècle*" sensibility. They can compensate for losses with foreigners, as they did during the thirty postwar years of prosperity, but they thereby risk increasing tension between immigrants and workers threatened with unemployment. The democratic-liberal synthesis and the mixed economy are threatened, probably by the end of the century, by the slowing of growth,

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inflation, monetary disorder, and the proportion of transfer payments in the national income. After an almost miraculous recovery, France is losing its place in the world, because it has not adapted to the rigors of competition, because it is half-paralyzed by internal quarrels and the persistence of anachronistic ideologies.

The United States has lost its military superiority. The Soviet Union has accumulated weapons, at first to intimidate, and also to intervene as soon as an opportunity arises. The political class of the American republic, the Eastern elite, that inspired and conducted diplomacy for a quarter-century, has committed suicide; responsible for the Vietnam War, it laid the blame on Richard Nixon, who had not brought it to an end quickly enough. Presidents Carter and Reagan oscillated from one extreme to another. The consensus on foreign policy has disappeared. The country is no longer rich enough to finance both social legislation and rearmament. It still has scientific preeminence and an unequaled system of production, but it has become unpredictable for its enemies and for its allies.

In Europe, the Federal Republic of Germany, more than ever the keystone of the Atlantic Alliance, seems troubled. On the front lines, touching the Soviet empire, it attempts to maintain an American army on its territory without irritating the men in the Kremlin. The pacifism of millions of Germans has reduced the government's decision-making capacity: Does it express the legitimate fear of horrible weapons or the rejection of participation that the German people has more and more difficulty in accepting? The reconciliation of the French and the Germans remains solid and authentic. But has the day evoked in the controversies of the 1950s arrived? Socialist or conservative, the chancellor in Bonn looks both toward the threatening East and toward the protective West. In what direction will he turn in the end?

If I were to give in to my darker feelings, I would say that all the ideas, all the causes for which I have struggled seem to be in danger at the very moment when, retrospectively, it is granted that I was not wrong in most of my fights. But I do not want to surrender to discouragement. The regimes for which I have argued, in which some would see only a camouflage for power, by its essence arbitrary and violent, are fragile and turbulent; but as long as they remain free, they will possess unsuspected resources. We will continue to live for a long time, in the shadow of the nuclear apocalypse, divided between the fear inspired by monstrous weapons and the hope awakened by the miracles of science.

I would not like to end this too lengthy retrospective with reflections on history in the making. By definition, it goes on; the point at which it stops for me means nothing in itself or for others. My professional activity has not filled my life, neither articles, nor books, nor teaching. I owe to my wife, my

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children, my grandchildren, and my friends the fact that I have lived my "reprieve," since 1977, not in anguish but with serenity. Thanks to them, I have accepted death – that is easy – but also the consequences of the embolism and the infirmities of age – which is harder. I remember an expression I sometimes used when I was twenty, in conversations with friends and with myself: "to achieve one's secular salvation." With or without God, no one knows at the end of his life whether he is saved or lost. Thanks to those about whom I have said so little and who have given me so much, I remember this formula without fear and trembling.

The Freudians

A Comparative Perspective

Edith Kurzweil

In this original and stimulating book, Edith Kurzweil traces the ways in which psychoanalysis has evolved in Austria, England, France, Germany, and the United States. Arguing that even the most orthodox Freudians are influenced by their national traditions, interests, and beliefs, Kurzweil examines in detail how in each country the insights of psychoanalysis have been modified by the national culture and applied to psychoanalytic medicine, pedagogy, literary studies, feminism, and politics.

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Edith Kurzweil

THE FREUDIANS

Where is psychoanalysis now, and where is it going in its own development and in its resonance in other fields of knowledge? The Boston Freudian Sanford Gifford (1985) held that its youthful, revolutionary era, when it appealed mostly to intellectual rebels, is over-subject to an inevitable metamorphosis that one may welcome or deplore. Of course, American psychoanalysis has declined in popularity, and its fortunes have turned. But just as people, to paraphrase Daniel Bell on Marxism, have to live through their own *Kronstadt* – that is, through the loss of illusion – so psychoanalysis everywhere will lose in influence after its initial (exaggerated) promises have not been fulfilled. Then its ideas seem to inspire "lesser" therapies while psychoanalysts devote themselves to their "elite" patients and to research.

During periods of flowering, leading Freudians tended to work at enlarging both theory and therapy, in the course of which they inevitably fueled the idealistic and humanistic aims of their particular society. At that time, as we have noted, not only doctors but anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and political scientists borrowed Freudian ideas. Fields like ethnopsychoanalysis and psychohistory, in fact, began to legitimate themselves only after psychoanalytic thought achieved a certain amount of visibility. This could not occur before the society had reached an advanced level of well-being – that is, before there was at least a small middle class, and before the political climate had become fairly liberal. Occasionally, this has happened during a phase of liberation in a repressive society, such as Hungary, Chile, or Argentina, when psychoanalysis had a chance to emerge from "internal emigration" to create some sort of free space for itself. (Under repressive conditions, as in Nazi Germany or even Yugoslavia, psychoanalysis could be manipulated by those in power or coupled to behavior therapy, thereby making it psychoanalysis in name only.) And before it could serve feminist or Marxist ends, a large sector of the society had to be conversant with notions of the unconscious, and the society had to be able to withstand massive internal protest.

Consequently, the place accorded to psychoanalysis varies from coun-

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try to country. In America, where it had its earliest success, classical analysis now seems to be in its furthest stage of decline. But this is a decline only in relation to early exaggerated hopes, since Freudian ideas are everywhere. It is now taken for granted that some of the symptoms of neurotic behavior may be relieved. The critics of psychoanalysis, however, who accept nothing less than a total "cure," never are satisfied, even when patients in treatment get better or reach a plateau. They expect them to attain so-called normality, a state neither Freud nor anyone else ever has been able to define adequately. But there is a kind of backhanded success in the fact that psychoanalysis did pave the way for its bastard offspring – that is, for quick-fix therapies that temporarily at least are being hailed as superior replacements.

I have indicated elsewhere that psychoanalytic history has been constantly updated to further specific themes, recasting Freud as hero or impostor, genius or imitator. I also have shown that the rise and fall in the popularity of psychoanalysis in line with its pertinence and adaptability to events and preoccupations of a given time could be gauged by the number and types of applications it engendered.

Taken together, the inroads of psychoanalysis into history, anthropology, psychology, and sociology have had an impact beyond the academy and have penetrated every recess of modern culture. In American universities, acceptance has been accompanied by rejection. Psychoanalysis has been incorporated into women's and literary studies, but even when social work and psychology students are taught only that "Freud was wrong," in one way or another they learn something about psychoanalysis. Many students during the past decade have been introduced to Freud via deconstruction. This endeavor originally was located in departments of French and comparative literature, but it soon spread into philosophy – Jacques Derrida's own discipline. There, among other strategic readings, the Freudian hermeneuticists, the anti-Freudian Popperians, and the "scientific" Freudians were displaced or, in deconstructionist language, "decentered."

In a recent collection edited by Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan, *Pragmatism's Freud: The Moral Disposition of Psychoanalysis* (1986), the philosopher Richard Rorty argued that Freud fits into the "story of decentering-as-mechanization." Rorty noted that Hume had treated ideas as mental atoms whose arrangement *was* the self, but unlike Freud, he had not changed our self-image. Most philosophers, it appears, have been upset by Freud's partitioning of the self, have rejected the threatening picture of quasi-selves lurking beneath consciousness, and have preferred to believe that a single body contains a single self. But Rorty found that Freud's "revisionary account of human dignity" allows each of us to "tailor a coherent self-image . . . and then use it to tinker with our behavior" – behavior that neither furthers

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nor hinders human solidarity. Rorty's view of philosophy clearly was influenced by deconstructionist theories, which themselves were influenced by Derrida's critique of Lacan.

The achievements of the classical analysts contributed to such fields as psychosomatics and literature, but the impact of *la psychanalyse* on the Parisian public was due to Lacan. In fact, his philosophical ideas were aimed at large audiences while he denounced the establishment Freudians. As Clara Malraux once told me, people who listened to Lacan (including herself) often did not understand what he was saying and were outraged by some of the silences and attacks on opponents in his open seminars. Yet they went to hear him and to observe him: he put on the best show in town. His outrageous behavior provided unexpected excitement, and his statements always left his listeners in intellectual suspense, mulling over what he had meant and wondering what they could get out of them for their "self-analyses." In such a climate, there was little need for books explaining Lacan, although the French wrote volumes that incorporated his ideas and others that disputed them. And there was the gossip surrounding Lacan's defectors. One analyst was a scoundrel, it was said, one a conniver; another "never saw a schizophrenic. One counted the suicides of one, the hospitalizations of the other . . . the unresolved transference to his analyst of yet another . . . If one believed the rumors, ninety percent of Parisian analysts should have been disqualified." (Clément, ({1978} 1987).

In this climate, it was unlikely even after Lacan died that anyone in France would proclaim him the most important thinker since Descartes and the most innovative one since Nietzsche and Freud, as Ellie Ragland-Sullivan recently did in America (1986). Still, by "moving psychoanalysis into the street," he probably was the most influential psychoanalyst since Freud. French classical Freudians, who now are dealing with the aftermath of "Lacanism" and who were influenced by his presence if not his philosophy, are currently reevaluating *all* of psychoanalysis and are particularly concerned with the future of the therapy. But so are the Lacanians.

By 1986, there were at least fourteen Lacanian "leaders," each claiming to be the true successor. Some of them, such as Serge Leclaire and Didier Anzieu, appeared to be moving closer to the classical Freudians; others, like Françoise Dolto and Jacques-Alain Miller, were holding their own ground. Their many publications flourished. In addition to the monthly newsletter of the *Ecole de la Cause Freudienne*, *L'Ane*, and *Ornicar?*, there were *Le Cout freudien*, *Le Discours Psychanalytique*, *Cahiers de lectures freudiennes*, *Confrontation*, *Psychanalystes: le politique et l'exclusion du feminin*, *Littoral*, *Scilicet*, the proceedings of the meetings of the Cartels Constituants de l'Analyse Freudienne, *Inceste: Nouvelle revue*

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d'ethnopsychiatrie, and *Etudes freudiennes*, among others.

While all these publications were full of philosophical and literary excursions, they usually were meant to illuminate the therapy, and, except for medicine and psychiatry, they were not sponsored by academic departments. The publications themselves exemplified the existing confusion, which also was palpable at the many conferences set up by psychoanalysts who hoped to organize this chaos. Thus the Association Fondation Rocinante, most of whose members are South American Lacanians who moved to Paris to escape repression in their countries, organized an international interdisciplinary conference on "Psychoanalysis under Terrorism." To judge from the proceedings, edited by Heitor O'Dwyer de Macedo (1988), Lacanian language was spoken by a lot of leftist analysts who seriously and eloquently were calling for an end to terrorist governments.

Still, even if the members of the many small post-Lacanian factions should manage to survive by sending each other patients, it appeared doubtful that they would be able to institute a responsible means of training young analysts. The conferences, to some extent, have taken the place of Lacan's seminars: they draw up to a thousand people. And they are more democratic than Lacan's meetings insofar as they have a number of speakers and encourage heated dialogue with a participating audience.

After René Major gave up his meetings around *Confrontation*, Alain de Mijolla helped fill the gap. Starting in 1981, he organized yearly meetings in Aix-en-Provence, led by psychoanalysts and people from other disciplines, around such themes as "Suffering, Pleasure and Thought," "Languages," "Metapsychology and Philosophy," and "Body and History" (1986). De Mijolla also cofounded the International Freudian Society in 1985, and in the same year started the International Association for the History of Psychoanalysis. These meetings have served to heal wounds inflicted even before the death of, and disillusion with, Lacan, and they have helped keep psychoanalysis in the news. Just as everywhere else, Parisian psychoanalysts lived by their reputations. But, because of the loose organizational structures and the inherent anti-institutionalism, the French referral system is poor. Thus the French are more dependent on a good show at a public meeting, or on an interesting book than are their foreign colleagues. This need for visibility, along with the acceptance of interdisciplinarity, not only has made for the plethora of provocative readings of psychoanalytic subjects but has turned many of these analysts into fantastic intellectual performers.

Paris between the 1950s and the early 1980s resembled Freud's Vienna: psychoanalysts entered into political and intellectual debates and did not hide behind their couches. In 1974, for instance, Chasseguet-Smirgel edited a collection of essays on the "path of anti-Oedipus." Didier Anzieu, who had

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been analyzed by Lacan in 1949, left the Société Psychanalytique de Paris (SPP) in 1953 and joined J. B. Pontalis in starting the Société Psychanalytique Française in 1960; then he argued that Freud had undertaken his self-analysis in order to overcome his psychotic anxieties and that he had formulated his subsequent theories to establish successive defenses against depression. In 1986, Anzieu, writing explicitly against Lacan, provided one of the best descriptions of the plight of post-Lacanians. He was especially upset by their clinical practices – the floating attention and the systematic silences which were supposed to elicit the patient's infantile memories but usually did not bring about the expected transformation. Anzieu questioned Lacanian techniques, which assumed that interpreting "the letters" of an analysand's language would penetrate his unconscious and "become a language game" – often at the expense of the analysand. Thus he rejoined those classical analysts who, after treating patients who had been seeing Lacanians, either found that language analysis had been counterproductive for a proper transference or that even when it had worked it had not been handled carefully enough.

François Perrier's transference, for instance, had occurred the instant he met Lacan. Together with Serge Leclaire and Wladimir Granoff, Perrier (1985) informed us, he had been part of Lacan's governing troika. But feeling betrayed, he had turned on Lacan and wrote a humorous and incisive commentary about his trips into *Translacanie*, describing the background of the splits, the personal quarrels, and Lacan's wheelings, dealings, and indiscretions. In fact, Perrier went beyond François George, for whom Lacan now was an intellectual crook – his former idol had clay feet.

These were only a few of the many "obituaries" of Lacan as psychoanalysts of all stripes tried to come to grips with the inevitable changes in their lives. Once more, the French were expecting to distill the best of psychoanalysis, as they had in the past each time they split and regrouped. All French Freudians were rereading Freud, adding new wrinkles to the texts or reinventing him altogether. In the process, the concerns of the SPP differed more and more from those of its sister organizations in the International Psychoanalytic Association.

Those German analysts who expected psychoanalysis to rid them of the Nazi past championed Alexander Mitscherlich's social progressivism, although some of them gradually limited themselves to seeing patients, leaving politics to the politicians. But all German analysts had to come to grips with the fact that there had been an intellectual vacuum between 1933 and 1945 and had to face what these years had done to their own psyches and their ability to relate to others. In analytic terminology, they had a great deal to

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work through. After they and their countrymen saw the television film *Holocaust*, however, many of these Freudians were aware that they had to deal with still more guilt and on a daily basis. Furthermore, they realized that they would have to look more diligently for its traces in their patients and for these patients' transferences of Nazi memories onto themselves. In fact, the Holocaust became more central in philosophical and literary investigations as well, and German classical works and authors increasingly were being interpreted in relation to it. Even friendships with Jewish individuals started to be examined as expressions of philo-Semitism, as possible reaction formations to anti-Semitism.

On the other hand, the reimbursement policies for psychoanalytic therapy mandated by the German government have been functioning as a benign big brother. It is difficult to convey the flavor of this influence, except by comparison: in America and France many possibilities for reimbursement exist, but they have not become as organized as in Germany – though not for want of trying. When reading the many massive and relevant documents, I kept thinking that only Max Weber could have provided us with the model for the ideal type of bureaucracy, since he lived as it was being constructed. At its roots, of course, are the egalitarian principles psychoanalysts on the "right" take for granted. Those on the "left," however, have wanted to extend these principles while at the same time denouncing the bureaucrats who must implement them: they are in charge of egalitarianism. But even if they were able to live up to the Weberian ideal, they also represent the dominant social class of the *Sozialstaat*.

This paradox is magnified by the realistic fear that a strong state, if led by any sort of right-winger, might easily turn into another fascist one. In that sense, German analysts take the critical stance of the Frankfurt School, and they heed Marcuse's admonitions that "the politics of mass society begin at home, with the shrinking of the ego and its subjection to the collective ideal . . . which may well mean – to live in refusal and opposition to the Establishment." So, while "rightist" Freudians assume that well-analyzed individuals will be autonomous and able to resist undue pressures, their colleagues on the "left," in line with Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, assume that in mass society conscience, responsibility, and ego-ideal are always projected onto a leader or a government, so that individual autonomy must be actively fought for.

Inevitably, in Germany the "rightist" Freudians have focused more on clinical questions, and the "leftists" have addressed more social and political ones. Even who may seek a psychoanalysis, for example, has become a political question when taxpayers underwrite the treatment. In fact, Johannes Cremerius, Hoffmann, and Trimborn (1979) recalled that Freud had stated

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that there is social assistance for the poor who get sick and that the rich and powerful can buy what they want, including the peace of mind that allows them to escape debilitating neuroses. This means that the middle class alone will seek to address the nature of an illness via psychoanalysis. Cremerius then described some of his own middle-class patients, compared them to Leo Srole's American respondents, and distinguished among neurotics who don't need treatment, those who make their neuroses functional, and those who avoid role conflict through identification. He concluded that individuals whose ego and ego-ideal are linked to group ideals lack appropriate guilt feelings. Thus, psychoanalysts, he held, ought to feel guilty when treating mostly middle-class patients, even though these are the ones who seek them out.

In view of the fact that German psychoanalysis was nonexistent in 1945, its strides during the last forty years have been miraculous. "Too much, too soon," quipped one of my informants. On the so-called right, he was among those who felt that too many badly analyzed Freudians had passed down their Nazi-induced neuroses to their candidates. And because so much of what was called psychoanalysis had really been short-term therapy, and many of the analysts themselves had been poorly analyzed, a number of Freudians stated that it was imperative to do "repair work."

But the seven analysts and five social scientists who got together in 1983 in Frankfurt to discuss *Psychoanalysis and Its Discontents* thought research was equally important. They deplored the Frankfurt Institute's increasing pursuit of therapy alone after Mitscherlich's death and attacked the trend toward medicalization. They were afraid that this would transform psychoanalysis into an adjunct of the state's mental health system, at the same time depriving it of its critical edge. When informed that this transformation was being advocated because the state of Hessen wanted to see (therapeutic) results in return for funding the institute, they rose to the defense of psychoanalysis as a social critique. Attacking unconscious lies of (unnamed but recognizable) psychoanalysts, their unhappy relationship to power, and their frequent neglect of the countertransference, these authors were unaware that the issues had become important enough to be picked up by psychoanalysts throughout the country. So, when they followed up with a second critical volume, *Psychoanalysis on the Couch* (1984), they were joined by another dozen contributors and enlarged their critiques to every political topic. They were amazed by the enormous response to their concerns and by the large audiences who came to hear them talk.

Still, not too many persons psychoanalyze in the morning and become social critics in the afternoon, a practice that appears to be limited to German-speaking left-oriented Freudians. (Close collaboration with nonanalysts and students follows from it.) And, carefully and quietly, some of the German

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Freudians have reactivated the critical "Bernstein circles" which had been started in the 1950s in several cities and where analysts pursue such questions as the status of lay analysis and medicalization and relations to reimbursing agents. This is not to say that Freudians elsewhere are noncritical, only that their criticism either remains more private or takes the form of social protests for equality, peace, or humanity.

In general, much of what applies to American Freudians can be said to hold true for their London colleagues, but writ small. Only American psychoanalysis was in a position to develop unimpeded by war or totalitarian interference; the Londoners were handicapped by the blitz; the French had a hiatus of six years; and the Germans' gap of twelve years was multiplied by the trauma of Hitler's legacy. These events changed the Freudians' lives. That so many of them emigrated to Anglo-Saxon territory and were influenced by prevalent social, institutional, and cultural conditions favored the spread of psychoanalytic ideas in America. In the process, the various influences on psychoanalysis, and the demands on it, led to myriad new readings and interpretations – all of them defended and attacked. Thus it is no longer is possible to speak of theoretical coherence.

After 1945, psychoanalytic research primarily originated in the Anglo-Saxon countries. But more recently, German critical-cum-psychoanalytic theory and French feminist-cum-deconstructionist psychoanalysis have been exported to the English-speaking countries. Freudian, Lacanian, and Kleinian formulations were expanded upon in South America and, in turn, came back to Paris, London, and New York in altered versions. Although some of the ensuing differences also had to do with gaps in translations and with mistranslations, such timing itself tended to be in response to specific temporal interests and biases. Still, the psychoanalytic institutes that eventually formed in many cities took on their own personalities, influenced by the theories preferred by their dominant members as well as by the type of marriage worked out with psychiatrists and psychologists. Most of all, however, Freudians everywhere depended upon the press they got from satisfied patients. And nowhere did they abdicate voluntarily to emotionally easier and shorter therapies.

Steven Marcus (1984) talked of the overdetermined sequence of development within psychoanalysis, leading from Abram Kardiner's cross-cultural observations of superego formation (as indicator of cultural stability) through Erik Erikson's focus on ego identity ("'located' *in the core of the individual* and *of communal culture* due to historical accident") to Kohut's view of fragmentary and discontinuous selves. This describes the American scenario, although some would argue that theories of the self were already in

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the process of being replaced by the focus on object relations. But a Frenchman is more likely to see psychoanalysis as developing from Bonaparte's elaborations on Poe via Lacan to deconstructionism, or from Charcot's experiments with hysterics via Freudian psychoanalysis to Lacan, or to Fain and Marty's *psychosomatique* – depending upon whom one talks to. A German Freudian, on the other hand, would tend to deplore the early resistance to psychoanalysis ("blaming" it either for Nazi therapy in the Third Reich or for its demise), would tend to praise Mitscherlich for its revival (*Wiederaufbau*) and would – with varying degrees of reservation – uphold American ego psychology. His London counterpart would praise Jones's proselytizing and organizational skills, would point to the lively theoretical developments arising out of the controversies, and would be proud that projective identification, as elaborated by the Middle Group, eventually caught on around the world.

Every one of these reconstructions, however, plays down the cultural determination of symptomatology. In America and England the classical symptoms of hysteria seem to have been eradicated, whereas both French and German analysts keep diagnosing and treating hysterics, and thirty percent of Viennese patients are said to suffer from hysterical symptoms. But, as we know, psychoanalytic diagnoses themselves reflect cultural assumptions. Hans Lobner, a Viennese Freudian, suggested that in an ambience where a respectable woman is still expected to jump up on a chair and scream or even faint upon seeing a mouse, hysteria will be diagnosed more frequently than in a milieu where such behavior is unusual. Is the difference then between psychoanalysts or patients? Are psychoanalysts in more "traditional" societies more likely to diagnose as hysterical behavior that is "inappropriate" to men, or are women in such societies more likely to transform "inappropriate" sexual desire into hysteria? Or must psychoanalysts rethink their diagnostic categories? These are some of the soft questions which, once more, will get answers reflecting preconceived biases.

Whatever these biases may be, psychoanalysis has advanced our knowledge of subjectivity. We now know a great deal about the unconscious psychic mechanisms influencing everyday behavior and about the myriad paths such behavior may take. Thousands of studies have filled in and confirmed Freud's observations. These are the data allowing for predictions. True, such predictions are not scientifically verifiable, but the importance of verifiability once more reflects cultural assumptions. And it overlooks the fact that psychoanalysis has helped countless individuals learn to get along better with themselves and others and has altered Western child-rearing practices, family interactions, and views of morality.

What does all this mean for the future of psychoanalysis? In America,

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Sanford Gifford anticipates a smaller social role, less visibility, and more scientific advances by fewer persons – that is, research that may be disseminated to others in the various helping professions. Some of his colleagues expect therapeutic insights through applications of new knowledge of the self or of object relations. Most Londoners, I believe, would concur but would stress the great number of discoveries being made in the area of child development. German psychoanalysts are more likely to focus on the social impact of unconscious drives, to extrapolate to mass psychology, and, together with their "uncritical" colleagues, to establish formally a watered-down psychoanalysis as the optimal method for the treatment of mental ailments. As for the French, they are bound to find a number of innovative amalgams of classical and Lacanian therapy.

As these psychoanalytic therapies are undergoing their metamorphoses, psychoanalytic ideas will become ever more entrenched in the culture at large. But these ideas themselves are diffused by practicing psychoanalysts and are derived from reflections and generalizations based on specific experiments with patients. Since these patients, in turn, respond to their analysts' theoretical and clinical approaches, psychoanalysis on every level mirrors culturally approved assumptions. Consequently, as time goes on, each country increasingly evolves its own Freud. Sometimes this occurs with the help of anthropologists, literary critics, ethnologists, sociologists, or psychologists; at other times the influence of the media dominates.

In any event, Freudian thought in one way or another will retain its hold on the human imagination. Even if Freud's larger hopes for a better society have not been borne out and he failed to find the formula for wiping out large-scale wars and individual irrationality, he has been a dominating figure in the modern mind and has revolutionized our way of thinking. Despite widespread criticism and frequent hostility to psychoanalysis in one form or another, Freud's ideas have permeated the consciousness of humanity, including the minds of those who swear they do not possess an unconscious. Freudian psychoanalysts have helped many people and have provided most of the tools used by other helping professions. Ultimately, even if only aspiring candidates will be exploring their unconscious four to five times a week for four or more years, many of Freud's basic ideas will prevail. He supplied us with the means to explore "scientifically" the roots of our modern imagination – a conscious and unconscious imagination that has taken off in different directions, responding to cultural traditions, influences, and trends. Freud cannot be dislodged from his role as "father" of our century: no disinterested thinker any longer can deny the power of the unconscious, or the impact of both *le nom* and *le non-du-père*.

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Tsvetan Todorov

THE MODERN GADFLY

If it has become somewhat difficult to consider "the role of the intellectual" in our time, this may be because several common responses to the question seem to foreclose the debate before it even begins. One is first obliged to overcome the purely deterministic notion of intellectuals that treats them as a social group like any other, defending their own interests or those of their class. If, for example, one asserts that intellectuals are necessarily "bourgeois," incapable of expressing anything but bourgeois ideology, the question is quickly settled, but hardly clarified. Such a conception of humanity is intrinsically unacceptable in any case, since it fails to recognize that, despite the external pressures they suffer, human beings are distinguished by their ability to exercise free will and to make choices for which they assume responsibility. Man is a moral being. And if this is true of all human beings, how much truer is it of intellectuals, whose distinctive aspiration is to separate themselves from their particular conditions in order to judge the world by disinterested criteria. As Paul Bénichou wrote in his unsurpassed study *Le sacre de l'écrivain*, "Man is so constructed that he can place himself outside himself in order to consider his conduct in the light of absolute values: there would be no intellectuals otherwise. Their autonomy in society plays the same role as the autonomy of thought in life." An incomplete autonomy, to be sure, but irrepressible nonetheless.

Beside this reduction to "causes" (whose Marxist variant is the most common), there is another that reduces the intellectual's role to that of his or her immediate utility. In this case, various "ends" are said to dictate the intellectual's behavior as strictly as "causes" do in the other. Although such utilitarianism no doubt exists, it is a marginal phenomenon not especially pertinent to the question at hand. In fact, two types of utilitarianism exist among intellectuals and should be distinguished. In the first, it is the intellectual himself who profits from his mental abilities in order to acquire advantages, to increase his wealth or power. We have been familiar with this figure since Plato caricatured the sophists for using their eloquence to win meritless trials and for seizing the benefits of political power by garnering the crowd's support at public gatherings. We are hardly lacking in contemporary illustrations

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of this character.

There is another type of utilitarian abuse, however, when society places intellectuals at the service of its own objectives. This happens whenever a thinker, a scholar, or an artist blindly commits himself to the victory of "the revolution" – that is, to an ideology that is not dominant, but aspires to be. (Pol Pot, remember, was once a student at the Sorbonne.) Or, if the state itself employs intellectuals, it can turn them into well-paid official spokesmen of its authoritarian regime, cantors of the doctrine to which it appeals or of the dictator who guides it. Under other circumstances intellectuals turn into experts, becoming ministers or presidential counselors. At the same time, however, they renounce their identity as intellectuals, since their actions are no longer guided by the single-minded pursuit of the true and the good. Bénichou has called this "the Calvary of the man of letters": "Naturally inclined to dream of a society constituted and governed by an idea, he is never so miserable as when his dream is realized. The two natural demands of modern intellectuals – the free exercise of thought (that is, its exercise as such) and its incarnation in power – are cruelly contradictory." If, at the time of the French revolution, the *philosophes* had been firmly placed in power, a paradoxical consequence would have followed: no *philosophes* would have been left, since they all would have been exterminated for heterodoxy.

So one can admit that, at times, intellectuals express the interests of their guild or class, and that under certain circumstances they also use their skills to serve their own interests or those of "the revolution" or the state. Still, one cannot deny the special role of intellectuals just because, in all these cases, the liberty that distinguishes them has been betrayed. To get beyond these misunderstandings we must reformulate the question of "the role of the intellectual" by reviewing its recent history in our society.

It seems that all European societies (and probably others, too) understand the distinction between temporal and spiritual power – between the warrior-chief and the priest. This doesn't mean there is not a great deal of overlap between the two, of course: the emperor receives his legitimacy from the pope, who nonetheless may be disposed by the same emperor. In our tradition, spiritual power has itself been either lay or religious, moving from the first to the second with the rise of Christianity. In France this state of affairs lasted until about the middle of the eighteenth century. While it is true that during the Renaissance the poets of the *Pléiade* themselves hoped to exercise sacerdotal power, the attempt failed and the episode was quickly forgotten. And when, one century later, Malherbe judged that "a good poet is no more useful to the state than a good bowler," he was not at all denigrating spiritual power; he simply knew that it was reserved for the priests, not for the poets.

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Things began to change in the mid-eighteenth century as priests lost their traditional role and their places went vacant. For the period that follows we are able to take advantage of the exemplary work of Bénichou, who first took this subject up in *Le sacre de l'écrivain*, then in *Le temps des prophetes* (1977) and *Les mages romantiques* (1988). He has shown how this "coronation of the writer," already prepared by the Enlightenment, was finally achieved by the Romantics. One might even narrowly define Romanticism to be precisely this elevation of art to the summit of human activities, and the attribution to the poet of the role of prophet and ppiritual guide. To establish their doctrine the Romantics borrowed from diverse sources – from liberals as well as from counter-revolutionaries, from both mystics and philosophical rationalists. Perhaps the most remarkable change in relation to this last group was that the poet actually replaced the philosopher.

Bénichou's inquiry unfortunately stops around 1850, yet to consider the role of intellectuals we must also treat the more recent past. Looking back, one now sees that the poets' attempts to play the same sacerdotal role was doomed from the start because the script had already changed. The poets aspired to be the priests of the modern age; but, as Bénichou notes, "they had been promoted only precisely because there was no longer room for a real authority in the spiritual realm." One saw instead "the clerisy of an age that no longer believed in priests, that accepted the divine only on condition of doubt and liberal critique." Is it really surprising under such conditions that the ambition of the Romantics was never really realized? The bourgeoisie – that is, the readers of the Romantics – had its own concerns and priorities. The events of 148 in particular, and the disappointments that followed, sounded the death knell of a great number of hopes. A new phase in the history of this "coronation" thus began: since no one listened to the prophet, one might say (extending the biblical metaphor) that he then transformed himself into a "smiter." The emblematic figure here is not Victor Hugo but Flaubert, who found everything "execrable." Society no longer incarnated the writer's ideals and did not respond to his appeals. Offended, he decided to stigmatize it ("philistines!"), or to condemn it as a whole, even to reject it in principle. Or he decided to ignore it and to cultivate instead the garden of pure art, the disinterested pursuit of the beautiful. This second period was almost the inverse of the first, and its bitterness was proportional to the hopes of the previous generation. The writer still saw himself at the top of the human pyramid, but now he rejected society, whereas before he hoped to be its guide.

Things changed once again at the end of the century, at least in France, because of the Dreyfus Affair. Moreover, this is the moment when the term "intellectual" came to replace "man of letters," since "letters" and "literature"

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had been reduced to treatments of the beautiful. Writers and artists returned to the city and threw themselves passionately on one side or the other. And even when the "affair" was over, their engagement remained – to such a degree that they often became committed party hacks rather than deriving prestige from their spiritual superiority. This is the period Julien Benda was describing when he spoke of "la trahison des clercs." Benda reproached the contemporary "clerics" – that is, intellectuals – not for having renounced their proper exercise of spiritual power, but for having radically modified the notion of that ideal by substituting particular concerns (of nation, race, class) for universal ones, material appetites for spiritual values, and intuition for the demands of reason. They betrayed their identity, which had once been opposed to that of the "laity," and finally cast their lot with them in the name of a "realistic ideal" – as if such a thing could exist.

Although many pages of Benda's 1927 essay still retain their force and relevance today, his selective use of history, as well as a certain ideological *parti-pris*, mar the analysis, and few of his predictions have proved right. (He considered Barrès the typical "cleric," for example, but Barrès was not widely imitated by succeeding intellectual generations, who hardly can be charged with excessive realism.) Yet in a certain sense there really was a *trahison des clercs*: betrayal, not of any transhistorical ideal (that is, the rejection of practical considerations), but of a society that incarnates, albeit imperfectly, the democratic and humanitarian principles inherited from the French Revolution. Its betrayal, alien to the spirit of the Romantic period, was prepared by the generation of "smiters." This betrayal consisted in the intellectuals' engagement with different sorts of ideology – nationalist, fascist, communist – that are all incompatible with democratic principles. Sartre is an obvious example. In this the "clerics" – or at least an important group of them – were actually opposed to the "lay" masses in most European countries, and did not become their passive spokesmen as Benda had charged.

Since then, things have changed. The Second World War, among its other consequences, weakened and marginalized the European states, dealing European nationalisms a serious blow from which they have not recovered. Today they resurface only in rather particular forms: as a cultural demand, as a response to conflict with non-European countries (the colonies), or as the ideology of a relatively marginal extreme right. Fascist ideology was definitively discredited by revelation of the "final solution." The renouncement of the communist dream was slower in coming: despite the millions of Soviet victims of the 1930s, Communism's prestige was enhanced by the War. Neither the macabre show-trials of 1948-49, nor the repression of Berlin in 1953, nor the crushing of the Hungarian revolt in 1956, nor even the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was enough to shake Western intellectuals'

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faith in this ideal (even if the Stalinist model had to give way to other variants: Trotskyist, Maoist, Castroist, and so on). Yet one can identify this same year, 1968, as the beginning of the end of its long reign. The "events" that took place in Paris and elsewhere during May and June did not herald a new age, as its protagonists then believed, but on the contrary turned out to be the last hurrah of the old one, an *adieu*. They had, willy-nilly, loosened the grip of all utopias (whether "right or "left") on the minds of intellectuals. With the help of Solzhenitsyn's recently translated works, the communist ideal in Europe (or at least in France) had become an intellectual anachronism, just like fascism and nationalism.

And today? It seems that in order to discuss the different role of intellectuals today one must first offer a defense of that very role. An intellectual, one might say, is someone who judges the real by the measure of an ideal; but if he renounces values, if he ignores the real, he abdicates that very responsibility. This temptation is not a new one: it is a bit like choosing the *vita contemplativa* over the *vita activa*. To cite an ancient example, Tacitus's *Dialogue of the Orators* already sets out the opposition between the orator engaged in the affairs of the city and the poet who "withdraws to abodes of purity and innocence, and enjoys a holy resting-place." Tacitus's sympathies lie with the latter, though, and one can always find good reasons for such an instinct. Retreat is preferable in times of tyranny because dictators make their decisions alone anyway; during democratic periods, vulgarity and mediocrity reign because such is the common taste. Is it not better, then, to withdraw to some ivory tower and dedicate oneself to the cult of art or that of the senses? In our time, and especially since 1968, individualism has reigned, and contemplative retreat has consequently taken on a new form. Writers and thinkers have given up judging others, preferring instead to explore the depths and recesses of the self. "Politics" has come to mean just the politics of desire, and "revolt" that of the body. This renunciation has been neutralized, however, by the prestige our consumer society accords creators. Even when they tell us, "I have nothing to teach you," we take that as a precept and want to imitate them.

So if one wishes intellectuals to have a role today one must first struggle to maintain, or reestablish, a public life that means more than the protection of innumerable private lives. The situation of the modern intellectual is, in this regard, completely different from that of Bossuet's time. Long ago the intellectual made himself out to be an interpreter of the Divine Word; today he interprets "public opinion." The old-fashioned "cleric" dealt directly with the powerful; today the typical intellectual does not advise the prince but (when he has the choice) prefers to address society as a whole. The media therefore plays an essential role today by permitting this contact between

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intellectual and society. The book and the press, radio and television – their pluralism has become indispensable to free expression.

So what remains today of the intellectual's traditional roles? Those of guide and prophet have fallen out of favor; democracies distrust inspired guides, preferring instead the prosaic security of universal suffrage. Instead of praising poets as prophets, our society has lowered prophets to the rank of poets. And if one searches for competent advice on a particular question today, one bypasses the poet to consult the scholar – considered purely as an expert and not as an intellectual.

"Smiting" has also been compromised, though for other reasons. For if one rejects contemporary society as such, execrating and repudiating its very principle, one necessarily becomes the defender of a radically different society. Yet the attempt to replace democratic principles with others – in the fascist and communist utopias, for example – has been discredited. The medicine, it turned out, was worse than the illness. The only alternative for the "smiter," then, is not to reject the present in the name of a radiant future, but to return to the past. This explains the rather remarkable tendency of modern intellectuals to resemble conservatives rather than revolutionaries in their attacks on democracy, rationality, and humanism (blaming Descartes, for example, or Condorcet for the troubles of modernity). Their conservatism takes on various forms – running from nostalgia for the Old Regime or even ancient Greece, to the ecology and third world movements – but always shares an attachment to what Louis Dumont called holistic values: "community," "harmony with nature," a preference for hierarchy over equality, and the social over the economic.

There exists a third possibility for the intellectual, what one might call the critical role, which seems to square particularly well with the modern age. The difference between the critical attitude and that of the "smiters" is that the latter appealed to the past or future to condemn the present, while critics in democracies refer to the constitutive principles of modernity to criticize their imperfect realization. Our heterogeneous society plays host to many different social and political movements that nonetheless appeal to its own constitutive principles. One can point to the struggle for women's rights, thanks to which half the population received legal status comparable to that of the other half; or to the current effort to integrate immigrants into French society, whatever their beliefs, language, or color. The intellectual who plays the critic does not content himself with taking part in society, but acts on it, trying to push it closer to the ideal to which it appeals. He judges contemporary society, not from the outside, but in the hope of restoring an intensity to those principles that have been dimmed; he wishes, not a radical revolution or return to the past, but the reanimation of a somewhat faded ideal. To act

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in this way is more than a right: it is a duty imposed by the very place the intellectual occupies in a democratic society.

This role of the critical intellectual is hardly a new one, since it was incarnated by the first intellectual celebrated in the Western tradition: Socrates. If one is to believe the *Apology* of his disciple Plato, Socrates managed to avoid two temptations. On the one side, he did not participate directly in his city's government and refused all political offices offered him, even when imposed. On the other side, he did not disengage himself from the city's affairs to withdraw to a purely contemplative life. "I cannot sit still," he said, "and even if they had forbidden it I would have continued to philosophize" – which for him did not mean commenting on past philosophies, but criticizing the public life around him and offering alternatives. It is precisely because Socrates never wanted to renounce the possibility of criticizing and fighting for justice that he refused to enter active public life. He knew that "if I had, I would already be dead," since conflict with other political men would have been inevitable and merciless. His criticisms and combativeness were not unbounded, though, which is why Socrates refused to flee even when unjustly condemned, preferring instead to submit himself to the laws of his city.

Neither partaking of power nor disengaging himself from public life, Socrates found a curious image to describe his role. He claimed:

> God has specially appointed me to this city, as though it were a large thoroughbred horse which because of its great size is inclined to be lazy and needs the stimulation of a gadfly. it seems to me that God has attached me to this city to perform that function, and all day long I never cease to settle here, there, everywhere, rousing, persuading, reproving every one of you.

To play the gadfly in society, or even the prod: perhaps this is the proper role of the modern intellectual. Assuming, of course, that he is prepared to suffer the fate of Socrates.

Translated from the French by Mark Lilla

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Fiction

Gustaw Herling

THE EYE OF PROVIDENCE

In response to a summons, I reported to the Questura on January 7th, 1971, punctually at noon.

"Commissar for Special Affairs Palermitano – Antonio Palermitano – my pleasure. Please have a seat, I'll have coffee brought at once. You look rather concerned. There's no reason for it, believe me. As a political emigré, you are, of course, under discreet surveillance. But there are no charges against you, we have noticed nothing suspicious in your behavior. Except perhaps for your close relations with Malcolm Melton. And it is in connection with that affair that you were asked to come here."

"Is there a Malcolm Melton affair?"

"There is, there is, and it became more serious last night at midnight – the moment Melton ceased to exist. At midnight he got into a car parked in front of his house in London, he turned on the engine, and ceased to exist. Judging by the wires from Scotland Yard, there won't be much to scrape up for his coffin. The way we describe it in police language is total disintegration of vehicle and driver resulting from the detonation of a high-power explosive charge. Or nearly total; a special commission decides on the percentage of disintegration. You look horrified. And with good reason, more than good reason, after all you lost someone near to you, a close acquaintance, maybe even a good friend. Our English colleagues are asking us for as detailed a report as possible on the years Melton spent in Naples. A good many years, isn't that so? He had a beautiful villa on the Posillipo hill, felt totally at home here, and rarely and reluctantly did he ever go to London. After all, what did he have to go for? The Melton family was dying out, Malcolm was Sir Harold's only child. We'll come back to all this, but let's get a few details straight first. You are at the head of a hastily prepared list of people Malcolm was regularly in touch with. Whether it was purely social or not should become clear in the course of our conversation. Conversation, I want to stress

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that; God forbid that you should have any fears or suspicions in your head. I understand, or rather I infer from the report of one of our agents, that you drove Malcolm to the airport a month ago. A sudden departure, sudden and final as it turned out! He sold his villa on Posillipo, quick and cheap, he sent several crates of family mementos back to London, packed his bags, and "Goodbye to Italy." Like that English poet (I don't remember his name) who wrote a little poem with that very title to say farewell forever to Ischia after an unfortunate experience with his adolescent boyfriend."

"Pardon me, Signor Commissario, but I don't think we'll get very far this way. Your countrymen have a saying in these circumstances: don't try to put too much meat on the fire."

"You're right, you're right a hundred times over, *bravo*, *bravissimo*! You almost make me blush. I insist on proceeding in an orderly fashion, and the first thing I do is circle around things. We were still talking about his sudden departure, however, and since you drove him to the airport, you must have heard something or other about his reasons for leaving or at least guessed them."

"Signor Commissario, you mentioned the English poet Auden's 'Goodbye to the Mezzogiorno,' and made a quite unambiguous reference to his sexual preferences. But what comes to my mind is a short story by the English writer Conrad, a Neapolitan tale written early in this century and entitled "Il Conde." You don't know it? I thought not. Well nowadays the story sounds almost laughable. It is the story of a foreign aristocrat who has long spent a good part of the year in Naples for reasons of health and leaves his beloved city forever after being the victim of a hold-up in the Villa Comunale. You have to admit that it would be a laughing matter nowadays. Thousands of foreigners would have to swear never to set foot in Naples again, if all it took were a *scippo*. But Conrad's story is much subtler than it might seem today. The hero feels that the sense of his own dignity has suddenly been jeopardized. It is more than that, though – he feels mortally wounded and flees, he actually runs away after what has happened. Driving Malcolm to the airport, I had the impression that I was bidding farewell to someone else who had been mortally wounded and was fleeing from Naples. At the same time it would be hard for me to explain precisely or in any detail just what it was that so mortally wounded him."

"We can combine our forces and think about the exact details later. All I want to suggest right now is that I wouldn't discount the experience of that English poet, as you do. In any case, we really ought to stop groping around in the dark; let's start back at the beginning and then proceed one step at a time. Otherwise I'll never be able to satisfy the request of our colleagues at Scotland Yard. When did you first meet Malcolm Melton, and what were the

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circumstances?"

"During the war. We were chasing the Germans who were rapidly retreating up the Adriatic. I was radio operator in the Polish artillery division. Air reconnaissance was needed for successful pursuit, so an English airman was detached to us, Lieutenant Melton. He flew a dilapidated little one-seater – we called it the "Duck." He flew at very low altitude for maximum visibility, to help us find the range of moving enemy targets as accurately as possible. Since I knew English, I was assigned to receive his orders and corrections by radio and relay them to our gunnery positions. Malcolm was a master at tracking the Germans, but he ran terrible risks circling so low over their constantly changing positions and dodging German fire in the twilight. He played a dangerous game, and he enjoyed it; danger was what he was looking for. Like many well-bred young Englishmen, he seemed to think of the war as a once-in-a-lifetime chance for some sport, a unique kind of safari. Our joint efforts were very successful, and the "Duck" became the division mascot. Every evening after the day's action, Malcolm would drive his jeep over from the landing field to see us. He was tall and handsome, and there was something boyish about him. He had a gawky flat-footed way of walking that earned him the nickname of the "Drake" from our soldiers. He drank a lot, but he could hold his liquor. Evidently he overdid it the day he was promoted to captain, because that night on his way back from the mess he ran his jeep into a transport truck. He came out of the accident with his left leg broken in several places. But perhaps I am dawdling over this too much?"

"You might actually summarize a bit at this stage."

"That's what I'll do, because the rest of it I know only at second hand. After an operation in a field hospital in Italy, they took him to England for further treatment, but it did not give the hoped-for results. He was left with a bad limp, and he couldn't walk without a cane. He remained that way forever. I lost sight of him. The last thing I heard of him, it turned out that at the end of the war he accepted a commission in the regular army and went to work in ordnance. Two years after the war Sir Harold, who had been Councillor at the British Embassy in Rome during World War I, returned to Naples to his villa on Posillipo. In the meantime I had left Rome for discharge in England."

"Did you look up Malcolm in London?"

"I tried to. They told me on the telephone that he had gone to the States on service. I left my address and phone number. He never called back, and I took it to mean he did not want to resume a wartime friendship. And I didn't bother him again."

"Could we digress for a moment, while we have the chance? Tell me about Malcolm's father. I had his dossier dug out of the archives, pretty thick,

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since he lived in Naples for many years. But I only glanced through it before you came. I would be glad to hear anything you can tell me about Sir Harold."

"I never had any personal contact with him. He died in 1958. I settled in Naples permanently in 1955; and in 1957 Malcolm, then a colonel, was posted to NATO in Naples at his own request. But we didn't run into each other until after his father's death. He certainly was not fond of his father, although he inherited a substantial fortune from him in England as well as the villa on Posillipo. I suspect Malcolm blamed him for the death of his mother. You know, of course, Signor Commissario, how it generally was with rich Englishmen who settled in Naples early in the century and even between the wars. More than the climate and the beauties of the city, it was the ease in finding young boys without fear of scandal, discrimination, or blackmail. Naples was a paradise for homosexuals. Malcolm was born during the First World War. Immediately after the war, Sir Harold left the diplomatic service, sent his wife and child back to England, bought himself the villa on the Posillipo and put down roots in Naples. In the paradise of homosexuals. His wife joined him in the 1920s without the child, who was sent to school in England. As far as I know, they never found out whether she was drunk and drowned swimming off the rocks at the foot of the villa or whether she committed suicide."

"They did, they did. She killed herself. But the matter was hushed up out of respect for Sir Harold's position. In any case, as I understand it, Malcolm made his first appearance in Italy (not counting his entry into the world) in the uniform of a British officer. He was studying at Oxford when the war broke out and had no longing to see his father, who naturally provided him with generous support."

"Yes. He didn't even bother to look at the villa after Naples had been liberated. It was uninhabited in any case, because Sir Harold spent the last war behind a desk in some ministry in London. By the way, I am not altogether sure that the father looked forward to seeing his son, what with the obscure circumstances of his wife's death and the heat of the "paradisiacal" rays of the Neapolitan sun. Enough of that. When Malcolm asked to be posted to NATO in Naples, his father was on his last legs after a massive heart attack. They lived together barely six months at Villa Melton. Soon after Sir Harold's death his son resigned his commission, took off his colonel's uniform, and entered into possession of the villa. He was relatively young when he was transformed into a foreign pensioner on your marvelous bay under this blessed mild sky of yours. Sometime before, he had heard from a Canadian lady friend of mine who worked at NATO that I was living in Naples, but it wasn't until May 1959 that I received a cordial letter from him

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inviting me to supper at Villa Melton. After that I went often, at least once a month, and in late 1970 much more frequently."

"This is the point where our real conversation begins, real in the sense that I will be all ears. If I can help our colleagues at Scotland Yard in any way, it will be chiefly because of what you can tell me about your contacts with Malcolm in Naples. Consider yourself free to the utmost not to try to condense things. Anything may be important, even things that instinctively strike you as insignificant."

"I came away from my first visit feeling strange and somewhat depressed. Of course, Signor Commissario, you know the villa on Posillipo. But have you ever been there at night? The road down from the street gate to the villa on its rocky spur right on the sea is a half-kilometer long; it runs through a splendid park with age-old trees, and it is pitch black at night. I was received by a silent old gatekeeper with a lantern who lived in the lodge by the gate. He led me down a narrow stepped walk to the front door of the villa, rang the bell, and then without a word set off on his way back. I waited some time. Finally it was Malcolm himself who opened the door. He was about forty-three or forty-four at the time, but he looked older. His bushy hair had turned white, his face was extremely bloated, and his movements were sluggish. He hobbled and leaned heavily on his cane. The inside of the villa looked like a second-hand furniture shop: it was a picture of seediness and a kind of intentional disrepair. We dined in his room; the gatekeeper's wife, who did the housekeeping, served. One whole wall was filled by a window giving onto a terrace and the bay of Naples. A large overweight Doberman drowsed in front of the fireplace in a book-lined wall. Books were strewn over a wide rumpled couch. An easy chair stood in one corner under a shaded lamp. Next to it was a small table full of liquor bottles, and a large engraving hung on the wall behind it. I will come back to the engraving, because it was the central point of my first visit. We gradually moved to the dinner table. Malcolm drank a lot; at first he said little and only in half-finished sentences, later he became more talkative. We went from reminiscences of the war to mutual, rather shared confidences about later years. He was fed up with the army, he had taken a fancy to Naples, and he had decided to live here quietly until he died. He had learned Italian quite well, but he preferred to speak to me in English. He had got a smattering of archaeology when he was at Oxford and decided to take it up again as a hobby. He had even gotten in touch with the local archaeologists, and they promised to take him along sometime on their excavations. And beside that? Sun, sea, wine, and reading. Wasn't that sufficient for happiness? A grimace of fatigue and boredom flitted across his face. Before leaving I went over to the engraving in the corner of the room. Malcolm stood behind me and explained that his fa-

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ther had dug up this old and probably valuable engraving in a Neapolitan antique shop and bought it for almost nothing. "A Masonic engraving," he added with a crisp laugh. An open compass at the top and a trowel at the bottom, between them an enormous eye. A stylized inscription underneath proclaimed it the *Occhio della Providenza*, the Eye of Providence. Whatever it was, a clever trick of the artist's pen or the play of the bright light reflected from the lamp and the moon shining through the window, the Eye of Providence seemed to change its expression constantly depending on the angle of view. Stern and formidable; nasty and angry; pleasant and good-natured; somnolent and indifferent; lifeless and dull. *Una vera diavoleria*, Malcolm said in Italian and again uttered a short laugh. There was a peculiar, elusive note that rang hollow in his laugh."

"It's two o'clock. You'd better get something to eat and have a little rest after lunch. I'll expect you again at five."

* * *

"Before resuming our conversation, I should like to make two suggestions. First. I may be mistaken, but I sense a certain reserve and caution in your answers. If my impression is correct, let me suggest you change your attitude. There is no harm or good you can do your murdered friend, but on the other hand, whenever you sound evasive, it unnecessarily reflects on you. Unnecessarily and with no reason at all. I repeat, there is no doubt about that whatsoever. The other suggestion is a bit premature, I am anticipating what you may want to tell me later. I read somewhere that you Eastern Europeans have a tendency to construct hypotheses on rather flimsy premises, sniffing out conspiracy and hidden machinations everywhere, what we call *dietrismo*, and trying to cut everything up, neatly or coarsely as the case may be, into parts that are all black or white. My remarks may well come as a surprise to you; they may strike you as rather inappropriate in the mouth of a police commissioner, but the basis of our thinking and the way we live is the *pasticcio*. Whether it is a braided coil or an alloy, there are so many different elements mixed up in it that it would be madness to try to separate the single strands, an absolutely unfeasible task. And it would be pernicious too. Yes, yes, in some way it would be pernicious. *Pasticcio* is our daily bread, we take our nourishment from it the same way we eat the casserole we call by the same name, a casserole we throw everything at hand into, and ultimately – I dare say – we are none the worse for it. So let me suggest, dear sir, please, no hypothetical constructs, no suppositions or *dietrismi*, no reading between the lines. Just the facts, only facts. Why do I

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raise this issue in advance? Because you mentioned the Eye of Providence as the "central point" of your first visit to Malcolm. It is no secret to us that Sir Harold was a member of the Magna Grecia Lodge in Naples until Mussolini dissolved Freemasonry in 1925. And after that he probably belonged to its illegal, secret, and "dormant" remnants. And after the war and the collapse of Fascism, when the Lodge was waiting for legal reinstatement, he played an important role with the rank of *Maestro Venerabile*. And then his son was invited to join and was initiated after his father's death. None of this is a secret to anyone with the time and the inclination to take an interest in the existence of Magna Grecia, which, by the way, still attracts notice every few years with handsome advertisements plastered around Naples. So I wouldn't overestimate that part of the Malcolm Melton *pasticcio*."

"I accept your first suggestion wholeheartedly, Signor Commissario. During our lunch break – once I got over the shock of the news of the London bombing – I came to the same conclusion myself. I'll tell you everything I know. But I would like to take issue with the wisdom of your other suggestion. Let me remind you that at the beginning of our conversation, you urged me to guess the reasons behind Malcolm Melton's sudden departure from Naples. I kept that in mind, because the suggestion was appropriate in my position. And what is my position? I was not Malcolm's confessor, I was not with him day and night, I did not travel with him, and I did not poke my nose into his affairs. First of all I was a comrade-in-arms he saw again after several years, then I became a friend he trusted well enough to take into his confidence, however rarely and only partially, but that is too little to provide the "facts only" you asked for. I am doomed, Signor Commissario, to conjecture, hypothesis, and supposition. Either you agree to that, or you might as well turn off the tape recorder right now and we can have the rest of this conversation in a café. I have been living in this country for fifteen years, long enough to know what an Italian *pasticcio* is. I do not deny that it has certain merits and offers certain advantages. But I think that there are also certain virtues to the baneful Eastern European tendency you so delicately mentioned."

"I am sorry if I unintentionally offended you. Well then, please say whatever your memory and imagination or so-called intuition dictates."

"Fine, I will not describe all our meetings in the course of the following few years. When I went during the day and the weather was nice, we would have a swim, and occasionally we took his motorboat to Procida and Ischia; the evening visits were full of drinking, chatting, and listening to records late into the night. In the daytime I ascertained several times that the continual changes in the Eye of Providence were not caused by the play of light from the lamp and the reflection of the moon; its expression constantly

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changed even in sunlight depending on where the observer stood. There was a trace of something like superstitious dread in the way Malcolm behaved towards the engraving: he tried to look the other way and considered it slightly indiscreet of me to stand in front of it in the corner of the room. Otherwise – and you are right about that – he made no secret of being a member of the Masonic Lodge. On the contrary, he spoke openly and freely about Magna Grecia. You must understand that he did not at all have clear and decided opinions about things; rather, he had a variety of phobias capriciously mixed with sympathetic appreciations. He was a conservative Englishman who at the same time made fun of conservatism, and how! He did not like Communists or the British Labour Party, but he granted they were right "about some things." He was a liberal with a yearning for "firm-handed government." He could not stand priests and derided them, but he was a practicing Catholic. (They can tell you something about that at the Church of Santa Chiara, where he often went to Confession and took Communion). His favorite way of describing the world we live in was to call it a madhouse. It may be that the Masonic Lodge in Naples actually struck him as the quintessence of the universal madhouse in miniature. The backbone of the membership were representatives of the rich bourgeoisie and professional people, business executives, magistrates, retired army officers and *carabinieri*, landowners and industrialists, and relatively impoverished aristocrats. But there were also well-known Communist Party members, and occasionally a monsignor would come from Rome dressed in layman's clothes with a cross in his lapel, evidently unaware of the Church's anathema to Freemasonry for its anticlericalism and its reputedly programmatic opposition to religion. It was with amusement and delight that Malcolm would quote the description of Freemasonry in the Neapolitan Statutes of 1750 as an "association of citizens utterly devoted to religion and the fatherland, and for the good of mankind united by the closest bonds of virtuous friendship in a single harmonious family." What was essential for him was the family harmony, the Italian yardstick for everything, the Italian navel of the entire world. As a foreigner he felt he was in good hands, probably the same way his father had felt. The Lodges also had something of a private club about them; after the meetings they brought in a buffet, played bridge and chess. One thing that struck me about Malcolm at the time was that you never heard a word out of him about his love life; even when mellowed by alcohol he frowned at the slightest mention of women. Was he following in Sir Harold's footsteps? If he were, there would have been no need to hide it in Naples."

"Until Tommaso Patano appeared on the horizon. When was that exactly?"

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"In the spring of 1964 Malcolm went with the archaeological group for three months somewhere near Agrigento. He came back in May suntanned, younger, and bursting with energy, in the company of a handsome twenty-five-year-old Sicilian whom he called Tom or Tommy. That was the beginning of a new chapter at the villa on the Posillipo. The newcomer from Sicily put his hand to the helm of the somewhat rotting ship. The custodian and his wife were sent away, general order was restored to the cluttered, dirt-encrusted rooms, and Tom went to work on the overgrown garden. Villa Melton came back to life, and everything was idyllic. Ah, Signor Commissario, it would be hard to describe those two men in love without seeming excessive or perhaps sounding ludicrous! I'll just leave it at that and admit that I am unable to do so. Tom was a fairly primitive chap, virtually uneducated, but Malcolm adored him as if he were a holy image. Whenever Tom went to see his family in Sicily, in Castelvetrano, Malcolm sank into boredom stirred by feverish nerves and soothed by alcohol."

"Tommaso Patano was not from Castelvetrano, and he had no relatives there. He came from Palermo."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am sure. We checked that when he arrived in Naples. Since I am Sicilian myself, Sicilians who settle in Naples are automatically my responsibility. Particularly the special cases."

"Was Patano a special case? I am not asking for details, and you probably wouldn't tell me anyway, It's a pity though, because they might clear up a great deal."

"Despite the half-hearted license I gave you – license to use your imagination and so-called intuition – it is our job to clear things up. And that of our colleagues at Scotland Yard, on the basis of the information we can give them. Your job is to tell me what you know. Frankly I now regret having rectified the little fib Malcolm Melton's wife or husband told him."

"Don't make fun, Signor Commissario. Believe me, it really was a happy marriage. Once when Tom was away, Malcolm confided that he intended to leave Tom the Posillipo villa in his will. Only one trivial matter disturbed the idyll, something that might not be too surprising to you. Patano was terribly frightened of the Eye of Providence, for him it was an effigy of the *Malocchio*, the Evil Eye. He begged Malcolm to burn the engraving or at least to move it to the uninhabited tower on the villa's roof. Malcolm would have none of it. He was always solicitous of the young companion of his life, but on this occasion he was obdurate and unyielding; he hit his fist on the table and beat his cane on the floor shouting "No, no, no." There are, you know, mysterious recesses in the human soul. I told you that he treated Freemasonry with a bit of irony, otherwise his respect for its symbol could

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not come into play. I also mentioned that there was no love lost on his father, otherwise the attachment to his memory would have disappeared. What then? I often racked my brain over it. Perhaps a single meager clue might explain the mystery. Sir Harold had found the engraving and bought it shortly before his wife's tragic death. That might have been what tied Malcolm to the Eye of Providence and filled him – as I said earlier – with a superstitious dread. I wondered if he actually remembered his mother or remembered her only very indistinctly, and if he thought the enormous and constantly changing Eye might be her glance from beyond the grave. Somehow full of recrimination and grievance, and yet at the same time protective like a talisman? But I am digressing and indulging in literary divagations, so you have every right to cut me off without mercy. I am a writer by trade, however, so I cannot think about your beloved "facts only" apart from their deeper and mostly secret context. Each of us has his own professional deformation, I as well as you."

"My professional deformation must now take over, I am afraid. I don't imagine that you have much to add about Malcolm's honeymoon years, although you might like to amuse yourself with the proliferation or rather the repetition of reasons for their domestic bliss. I think I am ready, however, to go on to the next chapter."

"The next chapter means jumping ahead to last year, 1970. The only way I can tell you about it is by lumping together what I actually witnessed and what I gathered from Malcolm only in bits and pieces right after Tom Patano disappeared. But I will stick to the chronology of the events. I can't see any other way to give any kind of clear and coherent account. At the end of July they called a meeting of Magna Grecia in Sicily. It was to take place in Erice, that splendid medieval town outside Trapani. It was a special meeting, because it seems there were plans to amalgamate the Neapolitan and the Sicilian Lodges. They did not count on a large turnout of members at the peak of the summer holidays, but Malcolm let himself be persuaded and went. He took Tom with him, and they stayed in a hotel in Trapani. On the day of the meeting he left his companion in the hotel and went to Erice early in the morning. The meeting was held in the crypt of an abandoned Franciscan monastery three kilometers outside Erice, where an extremely intelligent old priest did the honors of the house. A masonic gathering in a holy albeit deconsecrated sanctuary with a cleric playing host? That was actually the case. And the setting was rather out of the ordinary. There was a long refectory table, the skulls of long-dead monks were piled up in a pyramid in one corner of the chamber, and the ceiling was speckled with drowsing bats hanging from it. There was a tall heavy-set man with a gloomy face in the Sicilian contingent who was treated with particular respect. They called him

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Don Calogero. Malcolm immediately took him for a big fish in the Mafia. The idea that the Freemasons and the Mafia could join together, under the friendly and benevolent eye of a servant of God, a chaplain of the Church, was too much even for Malcolm. Don Calogero never took his eyes off Malcolm, as if he were subjecting him to some sort of examination. The next day Don Calogero called on him in the hotel in Trapani. Patano was present during their conversation; true, he did not take part in the conversation, but he was so obsequious with the guest that it was clear they knew each other, however strenuously he might try to deny it. What did Malcolm and Don Calogero talk about? I don't know. I simply do not know. Malcolm's confidences, right after Patano's disappearance, were full of gaps and abrupt silences which I did not dare to interrupt with questions."

"What would a Sicilian *mafioso*, if he really was a *mafioso*, have to say to a retired English officer and Freemason? You really ought to bridle your imagination a bit."

"I am still keeping a close rein on it; I haven't said anything about that yet. I will now, though. One of Malcolm's remarks did stick in my mind; it was just something he said in passing, with no reference to the gathering in Erice or the episode in Trapani. It went exactly like this: "They told me in Sicily that the Mafia is trying to buy arms abroad for narcotics." Who told him that? And why would anyone say that to an English Freemason, a retired officer who had worked in army staff offices in his own country before he was transferred to NATO headquarters in Naples? Let me just go back a moment in time. I was on holiday in Piedmont in July and August, so Malcolm's Sicilian expedition took place during my absence from Naples. I came back from my vacation at the beginning of September. The atmosphere I found at Villa Melton was rather heavy. Malcolm was excited and jittery: any little thing made him angry, and some sort of struggle was clearly going on inside him. He went off to London quite suddenly and asked me to look in at the villa every now and then. One time I went by unannounced. Coming through the street gate to the villa, I encountered a tall heavy-set man. I gave it no thought at the time, but later I realized that it must have been Don Calogero. The door to the villa was open, and Patano leapt up from the couch when he saw me. He could not hide his embarrassment, but he did not ask what I came for. I was struck by the fact that the Eye of Providence had been taken off its hook and stood in the corner facing the wall. There were crumpled papers on Malcolm's desk, the lid of the secretaire was ajar. I never mentioned this to Malcolm, even in the period after Tom's disappearance when he was pouring out his fragmentary and chaotic confidences."

"Why?"

"The whole business had its sentimental side; it was a love story too. I

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had not forgotten it at the time, but I was also maintaining the proper distance from someone else's private matters."

"Good for you, *bravo*. And then Melton returned from England . . ."

"Ten days later, in mid-September. He was in worse shape than before his departure. He hardly paid attention to anything that was said, his head bent over his chest and his eyelids lowered. When you spoke to him, he would start up as if from sleep or reverie. He was petulant with Patano. The term that probably described his condition most precisely was "embroiled," but embroiled in what? In any case it was something he could not or did not want to get disentangled from. As someone standing on the sidelines and not knowing what it was about, I found the situation hard to bear. I decided to stop going to Villa Melton, but I did not keep this resolution very long. Malcolm called on the morning of October 16th to ask me to lunch. There was such urgency in his voice that I couldn't say no. It was a sunny day, almost summery; there wasn't a trace of autumn in the air. After lunch Patano suggested we go down to the rocks on the shore below the terrace, and he saw to cleaning up the table himself and joined us a quarter of an hour later. I lay down in the shade in a hollow between the rocks, Malcolm and Tom were sitting on a small bench on the flat rock platform. The bay was empty at that time of the day – it was about four in the afternoon. Suddenly a speeding motorboat shot out from behind the headland from the direction of Procida; when it came level with the villa it made a sharp turn in our direction and gradually reduced speed. It slowly approached the little inlet at the foot of the rocks but kept the engine running. Malcolm and Tom got up from the bench and looked down below. Then Patano gave Malcolm a violent shove, pulled him down on the rocks and covered him with his body. A shot rang out. The motorboat spun half around, again gathered speed and raced off in the direction of Capri. I leapt out of the hollow, and the two of them got up from the rocks. Malcolm clasped his friend in his arms. Over and over again he stammered out 'Tommy, Tommy, Tommy.' That makes you smile?"

"Pay no attention, please. I couldn't hold back a smile at that truly moving scene."

"And at my naiveté. Yes, I can't deny that. I can see now that the whole thing was probably staged, but at the time I had the same reaction as Malcolm."

"Melton's faith in his young companion was restored. He stopped torturing and flailing himself with doubt and uncertainty."

"So much so that life in the villa was idyllic again. When Patano left the villa a week later never to return, Malcolm's idea was, I suspect, that somehow he had to make recompense for his behavior and pay for that ultimate

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proof of fidelity and allegiance to a deep and genuine bond of feeling. Poor Malcolm! The incident on the rocks dimmed his vision and clouded his mind. I said 'suspect,' because all I had to go on were his conjectures. The last chapter of this story, after Patano's disappearance, is not fit to tell. It can be summarized in a few words: prostration and I suppose endless thought about 'freeing' Tom, 'ransoming' him from imprisonment in some out-of-the-way place in Sicily. Bear in mind, Signor Commissario, that this too is in the sphere of my mind-reading. Even though I was now going to Villa Melton almost every day, rather like visiting a lonely invalid who has to be looked after, and though Malcolm was now more willing to take me int his confidence, it never went beyond scraps torn out of a wider context that I knew nothing about – things on the order of that allusion to Mafia efforts to buy arms abroad in exchange for narcotics, the Freemasons' meeting in Erice, or the episode in Trapani. What I want to stress in our conversation is that these were the only direct confidences in that last period. That was the final picture, and I had to try to work it out for myself; it is the fruit of what you refer to as my so-called intuition, rather than the summing-up of the little confidences that Malcolm let trickle out."

"I certainly do want to consider the finished picture you have drawn."

"Consider it or not, as you like. After all you were the one who called me to the Questura, and you are the one who is conducting our conversation."

"Since I allowed you so much leeway, and since you have not followed my suggestions, could we please dot the 'i's' now?"

"My opinion is that Malcolm, familiar as he was with the English terrain, was drawn in as a middle man in the purchase of arms for narcotics business. I suppose that Patano was used as bait to begin with and then as a means of blackmail and pressure. Malcolm resisted, thundered, took one step forward and then jumped back half a step, and calculated that the price might not be too high to maneuver himself out of the operation and pay to keep Patano. The shot that deliberately missed was a put-up show for Patano's benefit, but it was also a warning. Malcolm knew what the stakes were; he couldn't not know. He went to London again for three days in the middle of November, in a desperate attempt to make a final deal. Evidently it didn't work, because as soon as he came back he put the villa in Naples up for sale. He sold it like lightning and too cheap, true, but he was in a panic. The irony is that as far as the other parties in the affair he was mediating were concerned, he already knew far too much. He represented a serious threat to both sides. And that is the finished picture this author has, plus the "total disintegration" in London last night at midnight. As for the specific details, Scotland Yard and you people in the Questura will have to work them out

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together. Am I mistaken, or was there actually an ironic glint in your eye the whole time you were listening to me?"

"The Police Eye of Providence. We live, as you probably realize, in a vintage era for 'unknown assailants.' But we are only moments from your epilogue."

"Malcolm bought an airplane ticket to London on December 11th. I spent a farewell evening with him at Villa Melton, while the men from the shipping company were packing boxes. It was cold and pouring rain: there was a fire in the fireplace. Malcolm was trying to stay calm, he put a brave face on things, he clutched at surprising reminiscences of his Doberman, Lucky, who had died quite sometime before and been buried by Tom in the garden of the villa. The workmen came in from the next room. He told them what to take and pack in crates. And then, without looking at me as I sat on a stool by the fireplace, he nonchalantly took the engraving off the wall and threw it into the fire. It burst into flames, and in that fraction of a second before it burned up, it seemed to me that the enormous Eye of Providence slowly closed in an expression of mockery and derision."

"Tomorrow I will have our conversation transcribed from the tape. Come round the day after tomorrow, you can read the transcript and sign it for approval. I'll make a present of one copy. After all, you are a writer, so who knows, who knows, maybe fifteen or twenty years from now, when the dust has settled on the archives here and in London, you may want to immortalize it with your pen. That way I might find my way into literature by the back door. It is rather late; let me give you a lift home in my car."

Translated from the Polish by Ronald Strom

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Roger Shattuck

PROUST'S "MYSTERIOUS LAWS OF THOUGHT"

It is ten minutes after nine o'clock Friday morning in the rundown basement rooms of the Stentor Recording Studios in St. Louis. Sam Gates, fifty, owner and operator of the studio, is seated in front of his equipment threading a reel. Callie Szonic, thirty-five, freelance radio journalist and producer, is reviewing a script and referring to some books. They are waiting for Henry Fitzhugh, forty-five, Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, and for Ned Price, graduate student in French at Washington University in St. Louis. Professor Fitzhugh, known among philosophers for his book on solipsism, has recently published another, Proust and Perverseness of Thought. *Yesterday he gave a lecture at Washington University sponsored by the Philosophy and Romance Languages departments. His plane leaves today at noon.*

Sound of knocking.

Callie: The door's open. Good morning, Professor Fitzhugh. I'm Callie Szonic. You brought your suitcase! That's fine. We'll have more time to talk before you have to catch your plane. Coffee?

Prof. F: Yes. Thank you.

Callie: This is Sam Gates. Professor Fitzhugh. Sam lets me use his place as my headquarters. I have no office.

Sam: Don't mind me. I have to go out in a few minutes. Why don't you two go into the studio? There's more space and better chairs.

Callie: Thanks, Sam. *(They move to the studio.)*

Prof. F: (Clearing his throat.) You can understand, Ms. Szonic, that I need to know a little more about what you're doing before I can decide whether to participate. Your letters say you have funding to do a series of

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Editor's Note: This essay was delivered as a lecture at the University of Alabama at Birmingham on October 4, 1988, as a part of a symposium celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the publication of *Swann's Way*; it will be published this winter by Summa Publications in a volume entitled, *The UAB Marcel Proust Symposium.*

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programs on major authors in world literature. Do you mean to record a short talk on each author? And who are the authors?

Callie: No, not little lectures. More like conversations. We'll do an hour on each author. So far we've chosen Faulkner, George Eliot, Achebe, Goethe, Pascal, Lady Murasaki, and Proust. First a discussion to place the author and describe his or her genius. Then actors will read – really perform – selections from the work for the rest of the hour. Oral interpretation some people call it. We're hoping National Public Radio will air the programs. The point is to appeal to a wide audience. It's not a scholarly project.

Professor F: I don't understand. Why did you pick me then? My books are very scholarly, particularly the one on Proust.

Callie: Yes, but you talk about subjects that . . . *(Knock.)* Just a moment. Come in, Ned.

Ned: Excuse me, excuse me. My car wouldn't start today. Naturally. Professor Fitzhugh? Ned Price. I'm a graduate student in French at Washington University. Did Callie tell you how we met? In a bookstore, where I was reading your book on Proust. She asked me what it was like. Now she calls me her advisor on Proust. I'm very pleased to meet you. The reviewers didn't do justice to your Proust book.

Callie: I was just starting to tell Professor F. why we chose him to talk about Proust.

Ned: That's easy. Your chapter on perverseness of thought swept us away. Also the section on how the overall style of Proust's novel arises from gossip – malicious, loving, idle, compulsive gossip – the gossip of someone who cannot bear to let the wheel of words stop turning for fear that then everything else might disappear. You make your scholarship pretty lively.

Callie: Ned is an incorrigible Proust enthusiast. Which means he gossips too. But there's another reason why I invited you to do the Proust program. We're dealing with an author who took fifteen years to find his way to the novel and then, after the age of thirty-five, poured everything into one immense book which he just barely finished in his last fifteen years. Story of a man obsessed. You know all this better than I do. Hundreds of characters, complex subplots, hilarious scenes of people's behavior in social situations, lengthy meditations on the major philosophical questions of life. In the last stage just before he got started on the *Search* – incidentally, I agree with you that the old title must go – Proust wrote an essay on the French romantic author, Gérard de Nerval. It's in *Against Sainte-Beuve*. The essay contains a passage which I've always wanted to hear a Proust scholar comment on. A philosopher more than anyone else. Proust has been talking about . . .

Prof. F: Ms. Szonic, this is beginning to sound like an oral examination. I thought we were going to confer about ways of doing the program.

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Callie: Yes, yes. Exactly. I want to know if you think this would make a good lead-in for the discussion. Proust has been discussing *Sylvie*, Nerval's haunting story about three women, all of whom the hero loves and loses. The hero is pretty close to Nerval himself speaking in the first person. Proust, who deeply admires Nerval, tells us that everything is colored purple in the story, especially the name Sylvie with its two i-sounds. Rimbaud has the same color for the i-sound in his "Sonnet of the Vowels." Then in one complex and unforgettable sentence – I have it marked right here – Proust states that Nerval's story contains "the mysterious laws of thought which I have often wanted to express – I'd count up to five or six of them." But that's all. Proust doesn't tell us what they are and closes the discussion by saying that there may even be a little too much intelligence in *Sylvie*. Five or six laws of thought – the idea fascinates me. But there's no follow-up. What can we do with the passage?

Prof. F: I've read those pages on Nerval, but I don't remember the specific passage. Five or six laws . . . . There's a challenge for every Proustian alive, philosopher or not. Of course Proust talks about laws all the time. In *Within a Budding Grove* (another title that should be abandoned), the narrator blurts right out that "it's useless to observe people's behavior because you can derive it all from psychological laws." Now, the Nerval passage you quoted doesn't sound ironic or playful. I think Proust gives you the first of his laws right there in the purple i-sounds. He's affirming Baudelaire's *correspondances*, synesthesia, analogies. That law of association of impressions through similarity and proximity leads directly into the great echo chamber of involuntary memory: association in time. How's that for a first law? When you attend to them carefully, things mysteriously connect. The other laws may take a bit longer.

Ned: You make it sound easy. Callie, do you expect Prof. F. to do all the work? No. Then I'll suggest one. This may be more a principle than a law. I mean the double, the *Doppelgänger*, the identical Other. It doesn't seem to me that Proust necessarily borrowed this device from anyone else – Hoffmann or Poe. It was the natural consequence of his decision to write an autobiographical novel. He lays it right out for us in the Madeleine sequence. The second and third mouthfuls of tea and cake do not fill him again with the original precious essence. Marcel, who at that age may be about halfway to becoming the narrator, puts down his cup and turns toward his mind, his spirit, as the source of the essence that surpasses mediocrity and contingency. But – all this is close to verbatim quotation – the mind is in a quandary because "it, the seeking mind, is also the dark countryside where it must do the seeking." The endlessly fruitful dilemma of autobiography consists in the fact that the prey lies inside the hunter. Proust enacts this dilemma by making his

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principal character a double: the narrator and Marcel, seeker and sought, one character at different ages, two virtually identical characters distinguishable only by chronology, by the contingency of time. But style and syntax conspire to blind us to this crucial bifurcation inside the endlessly recurring *I*. Proust's *je* in all its inflections sounds like just one person.

You know what has happened as a result. Almost all of Proust's critics have become fastidious purists. Since author must never be confused with narrator, the name "Marcel" has virtually disappeared – too close to Proust's name. The editors of the three massive new French editions of the *Search* say "the narrator" for *both* persons of the double. They spurn the name that Proust himself twice tentatively gave to his principal character: Marcel. Yet that name is truly appropriate in a work of fiction displaying a subtle and unmistakable relation to autobiography. In the enacted scenes of this *Bildungsroman* "the narrator" is a patently inaccurate term to designate a slowly maturing prospective writer, one of whose principal traits is, by all the evidence including his own declarations, the incapacity to settle down to write or narrate anything at all. Critics should reconsider their skittishness and return to "Marcel" to refer to the hero and principal character. Even a Kafkaesque "M" for certain roles of Proust's "I" would be better than a blanket "narrator" to cover every aspect of the first person.

Well, I hope I haven't botched my point completely. I see the law of the double as essential to everything Proust wrote. A first person singular tracking itself until . . .

Callie: Ned! I can't let you go on. You agreed not to get off on a rant.

Ned: I'm sorry. I'll try to be quiet.

Prof F: You must be writing your dissertation on first-person pronouns in Proust. I'm not sure you need me here. Now we have two laws out of five. What about you, Ms. Szonic? You should answer your own question. Surely you have an answer.

Callie: Don't forget I'm just a radio journalist. But yes, I may. A couple of pages before the passage about laws in Nerval, Proust describes *Sylvie* as "a dream of a dream" or "a dream within a dream." I feel certain he's alluding to some kind of law. But I can't put my finger on how it works in the *Search*.

Prof. F: In *Aurélia*, another of Nerval's stories, he talks about "the spreading of dream into real life." It's really an analogy for Nerval's incipient insanity. Proust has hidden away in the *Search* far more dreams than we usually remember on first reading. After Albertine is killed in a riding accident, "the *da capo* effect" of Marcel's dreams prevents him from forgetting her, and the narrator describes dreams as "passing intervals of insanity." Proust was never swept away completely by dream or insanity as Nerval

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was. But the possibility is there always, a law held in abeyance, the threat of the abyss of unreality, of dreams taking over everything.

Callie: You see? I told you a scholar would help me. Now we have three laws: things connect, we are all doubles, and dream encroaches on reality. Where do we go now? More coffee?

Prof. F: Yes, please. You are relentless. I'll try once more. There's a psychological law that applies in many domains of Proust's novel. I wish I had a good name for it. Since I don't, I'll have to borrow a phrase from a critic I have my reservations about, Roger Shattuck. In his second book on Proust, Shattuck himself borrows an expression from Montaigne, *erreur d'âme*, soul error. The term refers to the condition which makes it so difficult for us to cherish what we have and leads us to see mystery and prestige in what we do not possess. Any one who has read a single volume of Proust can sense the operation of this law in the domain we call romantic love. We say possession is nine tenths of the law. Marcel's extended capture and imprisonment of Albertine demonstrate that in attachments of the heart, possession is one tenth of the law. But soul error, which wants what it does not or cannot have, also explains Proust's rejection of friendship. He presents friendship as a false and distracting personal relationship in which we seek "hospitalization" in another individual instead of cultivating the true life of the mind in ourselves. Shattuck fails to see how essential a role soul error plays in the great driving force of all social relations: snobbery. There's a superb comic page in the second volume about a rich and titled old lady – it's Mme de Villeparisis – arriving at the Grand Hôtel in Balbec. All the guests in the dining room are consumed with curiosity about her and the desire to make her acquaintance – a desire they then half-successfully suppress by convincing themselves that she is ugly and not worth knowing. Proust has written a subtle modern version of Æsop's fable of the sour grapes. All these constantly readjusted states of mind turn on the axis of soul error. Of course now we have come back around to what I discuss in my chapter on "perverseness of mind" in Proust. I cannot judge whether soul error has equal sway in Nerval, an author I don't know as well as the two of you.

Ned: Yes. Yes. Everything in *Sylvie* and *Aurélia* depends on keeping the ideal at a distance in order to sustain the illusion and the emotion. But . . . going through a set of laws like this . . . If I can remember accurately . . . Just a minute. Borges. That's who it is. Somewhere I read about Borges stating in a lecture the principles of fantastic art. They are almost the same ones that we have pulled out of Proust and Nerval. I think I can remember Borges's four devices. The work within the work, the contamination of reality by dream or unreality, the voyage in time, and the double. The voyage in time may be Borges's version of memory and association. But what does it all

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mean? Should we believe that these are four great universals of all thinking and all art? I'm not sure I want to be told that there are just so many laws that cover all cases.

Callie: They're not so different from one another if you look carefully. I think there may be an almost infinite number of laws of this kind all representing one principle: *interference*. The interference of one domain with another, one sense with another, one time with another, one place with another, one state of mind with another, one social level with another, and so on. Proust blurs everything, all our classifications, even our sense of character. Still, the *Search* represents a deep and strong faith in something – in the life of the mind, I suppose.

Prof F: Perhaps you can group all the laws so far under the heading of interference. But there's at least one more major law that does not belong with the rest. I think of it as the principle of self-determination. At three different stages in his career – in 1904 writing about Ruskin, in 1908 writing on Sainte-Beuve, and then some ten years later quoting Elstir in his studio – Proust states his conviction that "we cannot receive the truth from anyone; we have to create it for ourselves." Here we have the opposite of interference. In another place he describes every writer as having to start out from scratch, like Homer. Each time Proust seems to be reaffirming that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny – not just in the embryo but in life itself. He had his own monadology.

Ned: Isn't this what all the critics refer to as radical subjectivity? The impossibility of true communication between human beings? All the extended social occasions in the *Search*, which is full of them, and all the scenes driven by some form of appetite or love for another person, describe only the most superficial form of exchange between individuals. As you write yourself, gossip drives out all other forms of exchange. Marcel cannot even kiss Albertine properly because her face gets in the way. And in the opening scenes of "Combray," Marcel and his mother cannot converse easily with one another, even alone. Her goodness and tenderness reach him, unalloyed, only when she begins reading George Sand aloud to him in a voice whose lack of affectation expresses true "moral distinction." But there is a yawning dilemma here. If we must learn everything for and by ourselves, if we cannot communicate essential truths to one another, why write books? Why read them? Isn't literature a hoax exposed in the very pages we are reading?

Callie: And why are you in graduate school scrutinizing these contradictions and digging yourself into an intellectual hole?

Prof. F: That may be what graduate school is for. But now you two are going to have to let me talk about what's on my mind instead of asking

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me questions as if this were an interview or an examination. After receiving your letters, Ms. Szonic, I tried to . . .

Callie: Please forgive me, Professor Fitzhugh. We've been impolite. What are your ideas for the program?

Prof. F: No need to apologize. A discussion like this accomplishes more than a monologue. Ned just said the word I have on my mind. Reading. Are you aware how many scholars and critics have published about reading in Proust? At least two full-length books and scores of articles in French, English, German, Japanese, and other languages. It's true that one of the essential subjects of the *Search* is reading and writing. But most of the criticism I've read leaves me deeply dissatisfied. One of the most carefully written scenes in the novel concerns Marcel reading in the garden in Combray. It comes near the opening; any reader of Proust should know it. Marcel is persuaded by his grandmother to leave his bedroom where darkness, stray rays of light, street sounds, and other distractions prevent him from reading. With an unidentified book he takes shelter in the depths of a canopied cane-and-canvas chair under a chestnut tree in the garden. Here Marcel is solitary and hidden enough to read. The narrator devotes five pages to describing and narrating the act of reading a novel. I see you have the English translation of the *Search* there. Pass me the opening volume, would you.

The narrator moves in four carefully distinguished steps from the innermost recesses of Marcel's consciousness to the real world outside that surrounds him. Remember? First comes the striking metaphor of an incandescent object. It evaporates anything in its path and therefore can never touch a substance it approaches. The scene starts with a version of our last fundamental law: the incapacity of the consciousness to make contact with any other consciousness. "A narrow spiritual border" always separates us from the real world of other beings and other things. But: one precious mental activity can transcend this limit, this law. Reading. Proust explains this everyday miracle by examining the next level of Marcel's mind. While he reads, Marcel's consciousness is released by his *croyance*, his "belief in the philosophical richness and the beauty of the book." And the book offers a very special kind of material for his emotions to deal with. The novelist sets before us not the material opaqueness of real beings but transparent images evoked by words, images "which our soul can assimilate," which our consciousness can make contact with. These immaterial images have the further advantage of not being subject to contingent human time. They can move at an accelerated speed that reveals changes we fail to notice at the pace of ordinary living. The novelist's images have the privileged status of a prolonged, clarified dream.

The third level of phenomena described by the narrator in Marcel's

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mental state of reading consists of the imaginary landscape in which the imaginary characters move, a countryside that seems to belong to "true Nature" with a capital N, Nature "worthy of being studied and explored." And here the narrator or Proust places a paragraph that sets the tone for the rest of the book, its essential action and its intellectual life. Let me read the paragraph. There's no other way to convey the pace and the rhythm of Proust's style. The prison image in the second sentence recasts the earlier image of an incandescent filament that cannot make contact with anything. And notice how insistently he uses the word *soul.* I've checked; it's in the original. *Ame* means our entire mental, emotional, and spiritual equipment. The passage describes how an irresistible force – later Proust calls it "that immense desire to know life" – meets an immovable object – the inaccessibility of material, opaque beings. Just listen. I'll go slowly. It's less than a page:

> Had my parents allowed me, when I read a book, to pay a visit to the region it described, I should have felt that I was making an enormous advance towards the ultimate conquest of truth. For even if we have the sensation of being always enveloped in, surrounded by our own soul, still it does not seem a fixed and immovable prison; rather do we seem to be borne away with it, and perpetually struggling to transcend it, to break out into the world, with a perpetual discouragement as we hear endlessly all around us that unvarying sound which is not an echo from without, but the resonance of a vibration from within. We try to discover in things, which become precious to us on that account, the reflection of what our soul has projected on to them; we are disillusioned when we find that in this natural state, they are devoid of the charm which they owed, in our minds, to the association of certain ideas; sometimes we mobilize all the forces of that soul in a glittering array in order to bring our influence to bear on other human beings who, we very well know, are situated outside ourselves where we can never reach them. And so, if I always imagined the woman I loved in the setting I most longed at the time to visit, if I wished that it were she who would show it to me, who would open to me the gates of an unknown world, it was not a mere chance association of thoughts; no, it was because my dreams of travel and of love were only moments – which I isolate artificially today as though I were cutting sections at different heights in the jet of a fountain, iridescent but seemingly without flow or motion – moments in a single, undeviating, irresistible outpouring of all the forces of my life.

What can I say about such a passage? There's nothing to add. Yet one

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could talk endlessly about how much philosophy, how much feeling, is packed into every sentence. We want most to know precisely what we cannot know – the universe of beings that lies outside us. Our soul pours itself out by a kind of fate – entirely in vain. We live a tragi-comic paradox. Near the end of the passage you can hear the narrator, "moments . . . which I isolate artificially today," speaking in the present tense, separating himself from Marcel in the past and cozying up to Proust in the present writing this book, these words. The narrative goes on to . . . What is it, Ned? You want to say something?

Ned: Is it that obvious? Yes, just a parenthesis about the fountain analogy. I've thought a lot about it. The fountain belongs to a special set of images that affirm both flux and stasis. There aren't many. Heraclitus's river, the one you cannot step into twice. In our time, Wordsworth's "standing waterfalls" and Pater's "candle flame." Each one a streaming stillness. Proust's whole paragraph echoes Heraclitus's balance of opposites.

Prof. F: You're right. I never thought of that link. Well, the fourth stage of Marcel's reading is the immediate, his Sunday afternoon world of a chair sheltered in the silent garden. At regular yet unpredictable intervals that hushed scene is invaded by notes striking the hour from the Sainte-Hilaire bell tower. This outer layer of familiar circumstances contains the other layers going back to Marcel's soul or consciousness. They form a kind of multiple capsule or monad. Now all kinds of images in these five pages on reading tell how cut off Marcel remains from the real world he yearns desperately to reach, to touch. Yet the last significant substantive of the scene is *crystal*, reinforced by the adjective *limpid*. These two words characterized the magical, transparent hours of reading, our closest approach to communication, to getting out of ourselves.

Ned: What you say about the transparency we find through reading makes me think of another word Proust uses from time to time to describe the ordinary state of life without transparency. The word in French is *trouble*, which doesn't mean "trouble" the way we use it in English. It means a troubled, a disturbed, a confused state of mind. I began to keep a list. Toward the end of the *Search* the pages Marcel reads from the Goncourt journal cause a "*trouble*" in his mind because they seem to describe transparently people he has himself known and never grasped so clearly in life. If reading is our crystal ball, we live in a state of *trouble* – cloudiness, uncertainty.

Callie: You said earlier, Professor Fitzhugh, that you are dissatisfied by what the critics have written about reading? Why is that? Whom do you mean?

Prof F: (looking at his watch) I think the cab I ordered may be here now. I'll have to be brief. There's one critic who seems to have led most of

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the others in the wrong direction. Do you know Paul de Man's essay on Proust in *Allegories of Reading*? He spends half his time discussing metaphor and metonymy in the two paragraphs just *before* the garden reading scene – paragraphs in which Marcel essentially fails to read. Then he quotes at length from the paragraph I just read and examines what he calls a "reversal." Consciousness is captive within us, yet it chooses "to submit itself to the test of truth" in the outside world. De Man says that Proust's novel leaves no doubt that the test must fail, and that this failure is affirmed right here "in a passage whose thematic and rhetorical strategy it reduces to naught." Proust's passage never attains the desired "totalization" or synthesis. Now, de Man's Hegelian vocabulary is difficult enough to follow. But the principle flaw is that de Man has read the passage wrong. The narrator – here very close to Proust – is not trying to synthesize or "totalize," anything. He is presenting a contrast, an opposition between *real life*, in which our attempts to communicate with other beings are inevitably thwarted, and the special activity of *reading*, relying on transparent images, which permits a closer approach to the conquest of truth, to knowledge. Far from deconstructing itself by an inner contradiction or a failure to "totalize," this passage presents the special rewards of reading as an activity complementary to living, not replacing it but opening up its potential spaces. The earlier lessons about reading from "Journées de lecture" hover close by. Although time spent reading is "fully lived," it brings us only to the threshold of spiritual life, provides incitements to it. De Man fails to take account of the close symbiotic relation Proust describes between reading and living.

There's one more step. As a philosopher I have to take it, even at my peril. Near the beginning of these pages on reading, the narrator speaks of Marcel's "belief" in the philosophic richness and the beauty of the book he is reading. Belief. It may be the key to everything. At the end of "Combray," the narrator undertakes to explain why the two "ways" – Swann's Way and Guermantes's Way – have provided the essential structure and the most significant episodes of his intellectual life. Belief, a child's belief in the beings and things he lives among, lends them unforgettable reality and meaning. A kind of transparency without *trouble*. The child's belief in his world corresponds to the belief that we can provisionally reassemble and direct toward the book we are reading. In the *Search*, Proust casts doubt on many of our treasured values – love, friendship, social attainment, idolatrous forms of art. Beneath it all remains a startlingly invincible *faith* – faith in childhood experience and in reading.

Sam: (He has come in and waited during the last sentences.) Sorry to interrupt. The cab driver out front says he's come for you, Professor.

Callie: How did it go? Did you get it all?

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Sam: Perfect. This is one of the best tapes yet. You have a pretty good voice for radio, Professor. I could even follow a lot of what you said. And I've never read a word of Proust – *Prowst,* I probably would have said. Maybe I'll have a look at his book.

Prof. F: (Incredulous, a little peeved.) You mean you recorded all this? *(To Callie.)* You said we were going to plan a program. I never agreed . . .

Callie: Don't worry, Professor Fitzhugh. We taped some great material this morning. In a formal interview, thinking about how they sound, people often freeze up. You were fine. Believe me. And I promise you, nothing will leave this studio without your permission. We'll clean up the tape a little, make a few cuts, and send you a cassette copy. Then you'll tell us what you think. If you insist, we can do it over, or parts of it. But wait till you hear what we send you. You even did a reading for us!

Prof. F: I'll be damned. Does everyone walk into your trap as innocently as I did? All right, I'll wait to hear the results.

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Susan Dunn

THE DARK SIDE OF JULY 14TH

When we write the date *July 14th* or when we see it in a newspaper, who among us does not immediately think of the taking of the Bastille and the celebration of the founding of the French Republic? July 14th is one of only a handful of indelible landmarks in our historical consciousness. And yet the choice of dates was arbitrary. The French could have chosen, for example, June 20th, the date of the Tennis Court Oath when the Third Estate solemnly agreed not to disband until a Constitution for France had been written. But could a playful "tennis court" compare to a forbidding prison as a vivid image of nationalism? It might have evoked a thoughtful message of political courage and democratic institutions, but a Bastille it was not. For a holiday that commemorates the French Revolution, what better symbol could there be than that of the Parisian crowd's violent liberation of a dungeon-like prison that stood for the Middle Ages as well as an oppressive *ancien régime*?

The one date that the French could not have chosen was January 21st. And yet the French Republic was really born, not on July 14th but on January 21, 1793. The decapitation of King Louis XVI was the crowning of the people as sovereign. "Lugubre enfantement du vingt-et-un janvier" ("Lugubrious childbirth of January 21st"), Victor Hugo wrote. If one event marks the demise of the *ancien régime*, its values and myths, and symbolizes the transference of authority and power from monarchy to people, that event was surely the public execution of the king. But it should not strike us as surprising that the lurid guillotining of an unfortunate king was not considerated an occasion for jubilation. July 14th was undoubtedly a better and safer choice. The year 1789 permits the French to think of their Revolution in terms of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* and the Declaration of the Rights of Man; it encourages them to think of their heroism, not of their collective guilt. The year 1789 was the benign axis of the Revolution; 1793 – the year of the Terror – was its antithesis. The year 1789 calls for national commemoration, 1793 for national forgetting. In 1952, Camus said that the French glorification of the execution of a "weak and good king" was a "repugnant scandal." In fact, for Camus the regicide was the most significant and tragic

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event in French history. Another analyst of French history, André Malraux, wrote in the pages of *Partisan Review* in 1955, in an article on Saint-Just, that the trial of the king had been a "mockery" of justice, noting that "eight centuries of royalty sanctified in cathedrals were not so easily forgotten." Far more complex than the taking of the Bastille, the regicide evokes the tensions, contradictions, and internal power struggles of the Revolution. And it came to symbolize the moral failure of the Jacobin Revolution. In the late twentieth century, the regicide is still a scar on the collective French consciousness, still posing fundamental problems of political violence, of the separation of politics and morality, of humanitarian ends and merciless means.

It had not been the intention of France's revolutionary leaders to destroy the monarchy. During the first years of the Revolution, France was a constitutional monarchy and remained so even after the king's flight to Varennes. Only after the bloody massacre of August 10, 1792 was the monarchy abolished. And only after the discovery of the king's secret correspondence with Austria did a public trial become inevitable. Louis was accused of the murders of August 10th as well as of conspiracy with foreign powers. However, the legal basis for trying an inviolable king was very questionable. The Constitution, which the king had accepted, contained the provision that should the king betray the Constitution, he would be deposed. Were he guilty of any crime, were he to go so far as to place himself at the head of an enemy army, abdication would be his one and only punishment. He could be prosecuted to the full extent of the law only for crimes committed after his abdication. Given this Constitution, it took fast and fancy thinking to find a basis for condemning the king to death. The argument was made that the king had never truly agreed to and supported the Constitution; the flight to Varennes, in June 1791, proved his bad faith. Opponents of the death penalty for the king, all Girondin moderates, responded that, after the king's flight, the Revolution had forced an unwilling monarch back on the throne, thereby absolving him of any treasonous intentions. But for the Jacobins in 1793, Louis was guilty not only of his identity, of kingship, he was also a traitor. Treason was a new accusation against a monarch; it was a crime that had been logically impossible under the *ancien régime*. Since the king was believed to be the incarnation of the Body Politic, it was inconceivable for him to betray himself.

Whereas the only other king in history to be publicly tried and executed, Charles I of England, grandly refused to recognize the authority of the court and did not participate in his own trial, Louis was represented by legal counsel and proved a cooperative defendant. Much of the debate at the trial concerned a motion for a national referendum on the king's fate. The Girondins, hoping to save the king's life, welcomed a referendum, realizing

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that the people would not vote to kill the king. The Jacobins, more committed to extremism than to democracy, were violently opposed to a referendum (and to the Girondins themselves), and the motion was defeated. Arguments for and against the death penalty were passionate. Moderates like Vergniaud pleaded for mercy for the king, who, as he appeared in court, was a tired, humbled, and defeated man. Thomas Paine spoke eloquently in favor of exile to America, whose Revolution the French king had generously supported; there Louis would be re-educated and learn firsthand about democracy, citizenship, and equality.

But Jacobin axioms, as cold and trenchant as the guillotine, were more effective and memorable rhetoric than Girondin emotional pleas for mercy: "No man can reign innocently"; "this man must reign or die"; "Louis must die because the nation must live." Essentially, the task of Robespierre and Saint-Just was to discredit the notion of pity for a "tyrant-king" and show that the death penalty was the only patriotic response. Advocating capital punishment posed something of a stumbling block for Robespierre, who had sought to abolish the death penalty just a few months before. He solved the problem of his own inconsistency by arguing that a king had nothing in common with the rest of humanity. Robespierre and Saint-Just were scathing in their contempt for pity for an inhuman king. Robespierre admitted to having feelings of compassion, but insisted that compassion for the enemy was a weakness tantamount to collaboration with tyranny. Counter-revolutionary sensibility had to be sacrificed in the name of "oppressed humanity." The fact that people felt pity for the king illustrated their moral and intellectual insufficiency, their inability to understand "true humanity" and the primacy of the abstraction over the individual.

The vote on Louis's fate could hardly have been closer. On the first vote concerning his guilt, out of 718 members of the Convention who were present, 691 declared that the king was guilty. On the question of the death penalty, 721 voting members were present: 321 voted for punishments other than death; 361 voted for death; 13 for death with reprieve, 26 for death but with a debate on reprieve. The final count: 360 to 361, a majority of one.

The execution took place on a cloudy day at the Place de la Révolution, formerly Place Louis XV, today Place de la Concorde. Silent crowds lined the streets; the king, whose piety was universally acknowledged, prayed. After mounting the steps to the guillotine, he furiously protested when the executioner tied his hands, agreeing to this humiliation only when his priest alluded to Christ's martyrdom. At one point during the last moments on the scaffold, Louis broke free from the guard, ran to the front of the platform and proclaimed his innocence and his love for the French, and

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pardoned them for this crime. General Santerre ordered a roll of the drums, and the king's speech was cut off, seconds before his head. The last words of Louis's priest seared the collective consciousness: "Fils de Saint Louis, montez au ciel!" ("Son of Saint Louis, rise to heaven!"). After the execution, the royal head was held up to the crowd. People dipped handkerchiefs in his blood, creating the relics of regicide. Many shouted, "Vive la République!"; a few drowned themselves or cut their own throats. For these people, regicide was as cataclysmic as deicide; their meaningfully ordered universe had been destroyed. Had Erasmus not written in 1516, in *The Education of a Christian Prince*, that "God placed a beautiful likeness of Himself in the heavens – the sun. Among mortal men he set up a tangible and living image of Himself – the king"? By July of the following year, 1794, Marat, Danton, Saint-Just, and Robespierre would all be dead.

In killing the king and creating the symbolic public spectacle of the destruction of monarchy, the Jacobins had intended to set the Revolution on the path of no return; this they accomplished. They also wanted to create an irrevocable breach between the Revolution and the *ancien régime*; here they did not fare as well. Less than twenty years later, a restored monarchy would use the martyred and Christ-like Louis XVI as its galvanizing myth. Louis's death was assimilated with Christ's Passion, and the Restoration proclaimed itself his resurrection. Instead of an eternal rupture between the monarchical past and a republican future, the Jacobins unwittingly created the cult of a martyred king. The most important nineteenth-century historian of the French Revolution – Jules Michelet – attributed the Restoration to the sympathy for the monarchy that the execution of the defenseless king had inspired.

Michelet felt that Jacobin pitilessness had awakened tremendous compassion for the hapless Louis XVI, purifying the monarchy in the public imagination, laying the psychological and moral groundwork for the Restoration. There is little doubt that he exaggerated the political power of pity. Instead of locating the origin of the Restoration in, for example, the goal of the anti-French coalition to replace the revolutionary and Napoleonic systems by a restoration of the monarchy, Michelet portrayed compassion for Louis XVI as one of the principal causes of the resurgence of monarchism. The Restoration government had exploited feelings of pity for Louis and guilt over the regicide in order to extend its narrow base, but pity for Louis XVI had played no real role in the return to power of the Bourbons. Nevertheless, nineteenth-century historians like Michelet reacted to the regicide by labelling it not so much a political error as a moral one.

Michelet was convinced that Louis was guilty and felt that the Convention was correct in condemning him to death, but, he added, "the

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blade of the guillotine should never have fallen." Even though the unspoken maxim of monarchy was "from the king to the people, no justice and no pity," pity for the king should not have been withheld: "Guiltier than he realized, still he was not unworthy of the clemency of the people."

Michelet wrote that "the day when pity becomes a mockery begins a barbaric age." That day was January 21, 1793. The Terror evoked for him a moral wasteland rather than a police state. It pained him to have to examine the Terror and acknowledge the moral defeat of the Revolution from within. He would have preferred to end his *History of the French Revolution* in 1792: "Ah! gentle genius of France and of the Revolution . . . If only I could break my pen and end my book here!" With the greatest reluctance, he broached the Revolution's self-destruction: "Here I touch upon a sad subject; history demands it. Having reached the summit of the Terror, I find, like on the peaks of great mountains, an extreme aridity, a desert where life has ceased. Pity had been extinguished or was mute; only horror spoke." In the tenebrous world of the Terror, meanings were reversed; pity became barbarity; people were condemned to death in the name of empathy. The deputy Tallien voted against a stay of execution for the king, arguing that it was barbaric to leave Louis uncertain about his fate: "Humanity demands that there be no reprieve. One must put an end to his anguish. It is barbaric to force him to wait as we postpone his destiny." So difficult was it to voice a word of sympathy for the king that the deputy Fauchet was reduced to making the ridiculous argument that "his crimes are so great that death would be too easy for him; we must condemn him to live."

Camus quoted Marat as having complained that people questioned his claim to the title of philanthropist. "Ah! What injustice! Who cannot see that I want to cut off a few heads to save a great number?" As if he were predicting modern totalitarianism, Michelet analyzed Marat's mathematics of terror: "If we accept the supposition that we can sacrifice one for the many, soon they will prove to us that we can sacrifice two, three, etc. Little by little, we will find reasons for sacrificing all for the happiness of all, and we will think that it was a bargain."

In her book *On Revolution*, Hannah Arendt compared the French and American Revolutions, locating the failure of the French Revolution specifically in the Jacobin emphasis on pity for the oppressed French masses. Whereas the American Revolution, not faced with the problem of overwhelming poverty or suffering, committed itself to the creation of lasting institutions, the direction of the French Revolution was determined by urgent social conditions. "Robespierre's pity-inspired virtue . . . played havoc with justice and made light of laws. Measured against the immense sufferings of . . . the people, the impartiality of justice and law, the application of the same

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rules to those who sleep in palaces and those who sleep under the bridges of Paris, was like a mockery." "Pity," Arendt concluded, "taken as the spring of virtue, has proved to possess a greater capacity for cruelty than cruelty itself." One hundred years earlier, Victor Hugo, in his great poem *Le Verso de la page*, had condemned Jacobin pity for being the annulment of itself: "C'est par excès d'amour qu'ils abhorrent. Et par misèricorde, ils sont inexorables" ("Out of an excess of love, they abhor. Out of misericord, they are inexorable.").

In our own century, Albert Camus, like Michelet, was haunted by the problem of the regicide. For Michelet, the French Revolution marked not only a rupture with an anachronistic past, it also marked the Year One of a new era. For Camus too, the Revolution signified divorce from the past, but it was an end more than a beginning. In *The Rebel*, he mourned the demise of a world which had embraced a sacred order: "It is certainly a repugnant scandal that the public assassination of a weak but goodhearted man has been presented as a great moment in French history. That scaffold marked no climax – far from it. The condemnation of the King is at the crux of our contemporary history. It symbolizes the secularization of our history and the disincarnation of the Christian God. Up to now God played a part in history through the medium of the kings. But His representative in history has been killed, for there is no longer a king. Therefore there is nothing but a semblance of God, relegated to the heaven of principles." Men were left alone to create the meaning of their own destiny entirely within history. Camus believed that "historicism" was the most pernicious of doctrines and that it led directly to political crime, violence, and to the nihilistic and pitiless ideologies of the twentieth century.

Michelet had deeply regretted the Jacobins' lack of pity for the king, but Camus felt that the tragedy of the Revolution was the loss of a king who felt pity for the French. A king, who could bestow pardon and who incarnated the misericord of God, appeared to him to wreak less havoc on humanity than Jacobin or Soviet myths of infallible and absolute justice. Referring to Biblical and medieval concepts of monarchy, he portrayed a king as the compassionate, merciful father of the desperate and dispossessed: "The king is the divine emissary in charge of human affairs and therefore of the administration of justice. Like God Himself, he is the last recourse of the victims of misery and injustice. In principle, the people can appeal to the king for help against their oppressors. 'If the King only knew, if the Czar only knew . . . ' was the frequently expressed sentiment of the French and Russian people during periods of great distress. It is true in France, at least, that, when the monarchy did know, it often tried to defend the lower classes against the oppression of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie." Of course, the

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king's mercy and generosity depended on his will alone. His ability and freedom to act with compassion were known as Grace, the fundamental and essentially arbitrary principle of monarchical rule: "He dispenses his protection and his assistance if and when he wants to. One of the attributes of grace is that it is discretionary. Monarchy in its theocratic form is a type of government which wants to put grace before justice by always letting it have the last word." Camus hastened to add that such a system could hardly be equated with justice ("even though it is possible to appeal to the king, it is impossible to appeal against him"). But given the choice between absolute justice and absolute grace, arbitrary grace seemed less threatening than the Revolution's desacralized principle of rational and merciless justice. Despairing of the modern age, Camus lamented the obliteration of the *ancien régime* and looked upon Louis XVI as the lost king and savior.

These positive remarks about Louis XVI and monarchy are not signs of an improbable reactionary embracing of right-wing politics. Camus was never a monarchist and always felt a greater affinity for the political left than for the right. He was attracted by the myth more than by the reality of monarchy. Monarchy was an issue only inasmuch as it represented a charitable, divinely-inspired government theoretically founded on concepts of grace and mercy.

In the post-war and Cold War atmosphere of the 1950s, frightened by the growth of terrifying state power and saddened by the divorce of politics and ethics, Camus expressed nostalgia for a regime in which political power was finite and the moral authority of God and king infinite. Monarchical sovereignty emanated solely from God, and monarchy was, in theory if not in practice, an inherently moral, nonideological rule. In *The Rebel*, a condemnation of modern political power, Camus sought a sublime synthesis of ethical and political principles. It is only in the idealistic context of a search which ultimately transcended political reality that he resuscitated the memory of the French monarchy. The death of Louis XVI was a "repugnant scandal" because the Jacobins decapitated the reign of pardon and grace, because the French republic was born in a pitiless act of ideological murder.

In his last novel, *The Fall*, Camus described life in the grim and bleak twentieth century. In a godless and kingless world, the absence of pity for suffering humanity and the absence of pardon for guilt-ridden souls is at the source of the anguish of the protagonist, Jean-Baptiste Clamence. Without the capacity for true compassion, without the ideological and spiritual foundations for forgiveness, modern man issues only pronouncements of guilt: "They condemn without absolving anyone. [The Lord] left forever, leaving them to judge and condemn, with pardon on their lips and the sentence in their hearts. For it cannot be said there is no more pity; no, good Lord, we never stop

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talking of it. Simply, no one is ever acquitted any more." Clamence can offer no clemency. An irremediable fall from grace, a relentless consciousness of guilt in a world which knows neither compassion nor pardon constitute the sad human condition. The twentieth century, having exiled the king, exiled itself from his kingdom of misericord. Camus, by the way, had originally intended The Fall to be one of the short stories in his last collection, *Exile and the Kingdom*.

In Camus's vision of the development of the Occident, the decapitation of Louis XVI was the single most significant event in French history. No person, no institution, and no ideology could henceforth replace the king who, like God, comforted and rescued the poor and the suffering. In the cold, sunless, foggy universe of *The Fall*, the sun-king is absent and a tortured and pitiless "sun-citizen" reigns in his place. Clamence's fall mirrors an entire civilization's fall from grace, of which the execution of Louis XVI was emblematic. The sad and defenseless Louis XVI, the first victim of the Terror, represents all subsequent victims of political terror and moral indifference.

Lest one think that Camus overestimates the significance and the consequences of the regicide, it is interesting to read Jean-François Lyotard's pronouncement in a dialogue with Richard Rorty in 1985 in *Critique*. Lyotard argues that the regicide was not only a specifically French and specifically modern crime but that it is the point of origin of all modern French thought: "We French cannot really think about politics or philosophy or literature without remembering that all this – politics, philosophy, literature – began, in the modern world, under the sign of a crime. A crime was committed in France in 1793. They killed a good and entirely likable king who was the incarnation of legitimacy. We cannot not remember that this crime was horrible. This means that when we try to think about politics, we know that the question of legitimacy is always at issue. We can say the same for literature. The difficulty that Americans, and also English and Germans have in understanding what we ourselves call writing ("écriture") is linked to the memory of this crime. When we speak about writing, the accent is on that which is necessarily criminal in writing."

Like Camus, Lyotard has elevated the regicide to the status of watershed in French history. And, like Camus, he seems to envision centuries of monarchy as a golden age before the revolutionary Fall. But Lyotard's thesis does not concern compassion and political morality; he makes instead the hallucinatory assertion that not only French history but French language and thought bear the mark of the founding crime of regicide. It seems pointless to debate such a factitious position that isolates the execution of the king as the focal point of French consciousness and intellectual life, but it is a fascinating argument for remembering (he insists that the French cannot not remember)

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January 21st.

The meditations of Michelet, Camus, and Lyotard on the decapitated king and on monarchy, the political institution that dominated a thousand years of French history, suggest that the execution of Louis XVI still occupies a place in the French national memory, and that kingship and monarchy are not archaic and irrelevant issues. It is too facile to scorn the affective memory of kingship in France. The personal encounters between these three thinkers and the decapitated king concerning politics, violence, morality, and even "écriture" encourage us to reflect about January 21st, the dark side of July 14th.

Coming in

Partisan Review:

- Julia Kristeva on the French Revolution
- Helen Frankenthaler: *Thoughts from an Occasional Journal*
- William Phillips: *The Function of Criticism Today*
- A. B. Yehoshua: *The Israeli Novel*
- Jean Bethke Elshtain: *Feminist Criticism*
- Peter Loewenberg: *The Uses of Anxiety*
- Clancy Sigal: *Second Thoughts*
- Nathan Glazer on Life in the Bronx
- Amitai Etzioni: *Liberals and Communitarians*
- Anthony Kerrigan: *A Nicaraguan Story*
- Herbert Gold: *A Blazing Inquest*
- Jorge Edwards on Contemporary Chilean Writing

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Stanley Kauffmann

GERMANY: REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST

1.

I returned to Germany in 1971 with four tracks running in my head. I was the man who had gone there for the first time in 1967 and been surprised and not surprised. I was the writer who had, since then, written often for a German weekly and who hoped now to meet Germans who had read my articles. Beneath, there was the youth and young man who had seen the rise and fall of Hitler. At bottom was the child, of German-Jewish family, who had grown up in New York in the 1920s under twin imperatives: America was a miracle, but Germany in some ways was better. My parents were native New Yorkers, but their fathers came from Germany and from German-speaking Bohemia, and their mothers were the daughters of immigrants from those places. German phrases, German cooking, various German prides, affected my earliest memories. From those beginnings I had moved into the black 1930s, through the war, through the numbed and shaking years after the war, to my first German visit and now my second.

This time Laura was willing to come with me, which gave this visit an even sharper edge. She is the daughter of Eastern European Jews, and such Jews had been looked down on by my parents, by my whole Germanic family, during my childhood. When I first brought Laura home, early in 1939, my father and mother had been immediately warm. I knew this was, first, because of Laura but also because Hitler's actions in that decade had shrunken old Jewish snobberies. Ten years earlier the meeting might have been different, might have made this German trip even more difficult for her.

Still I knew there was some strain in her, and it was odd because this was not the first German-speaking country she had visited. In 1960 we had spent a week in Austria, mostly in Vienna, with little apprehension or discomfort. We were almost personally aware of what had happened in Austria after 1938 because our dearest friend in New York was a Jewish actress who had fled from Vienna in that year. But it was she who had urged us to see Vienna, who had written to friends to make us welcome, exiles who had returned. Vienna had seemed almost an extension of her apartment, the

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Editor's Note: This essay was written before the radical changes now taking place in Germany.

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source of the stories she had told us. We had felt protected on that visit by her early memories of Vienna.

Nothing like that had cloaked me on my first visit to Germany. I had been one of a group of writers invited by two foundations, American and German, to spend two weeks in several German cities. We were to meet German writers and artists and politicians. All these people had been cordial, some of then very appealing. An editor of a weekly had asked me to contribute an occasional "letter from New York" about cultural events, which his people would translate. But I had felt that most of the cordiality was quite deliberate. Now I had another grant from the American foundation to visit German theaters and film studios. I had asked for it almost as a challenge to my chilled fascination. This time Laura came with me. She wasn't eager. But neither of us wanted me to have the experience, twice, of another country without her. We had shared all our travels and could share recollections. As much for reasons of marriage as any other, this time she came along.

In 1967, when my plane landed in Hamburg, I was trembling. I could see my hands tremble. I had arrived in the country where it had all happened. If it had been twenty-five years earlier, I would have been taken from the airport to the ovens. Now, in 1971, as our plane landed in Frankfurt, I was calmer, tense but calmer. I remembered the trembling four years earlier, but I thought of what had happened on that trip, the friends I had made. Now I felt, somewhat uncomfortably, more easy.

German came to our eyes and ears as we moved through the terminal building. I had studied German in high school and college, and I suffered still from the illusion that I was always on the edge of really understanding it because I could still pick up some phrases. We went out of the terminal to the sidewalk. I was tussling with two heavy bags. A taxi pulled up promptly with a young, long-haired driver. "Look," I said to Laura, "the hippies are driving cabs here, too." Out stepped a young woman in slacks, six feet tall, who swung my two bags like powder puffs into the trunk.

We drove to our hotel. "Well," said Laura wonderingly, "here I am in Germany. Where is everybody? No Germans?" The streets were almost empty, the shops were shut. It was Monday morning. I asked the driver about it in German. She replied in English but used a German name for the holiday. I looked it up in my pocket dictionary. Whit Monday. Two nudges before we even reached our hotel. Brünnhilde driving a taxi. Germany, the land of the economic miracle, closing down on a business day for a religious holiday.

We were to be in Germany for five weeks. We were going to six West German cities and would finish in West Berlin. A friend of ours, an American long resident in West Berlin, knew our itinerary. Just before we

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arrived at each of our hotels, he sent us a telex addressed to Herr Professor and Frau Professor Kauffmann. The message was irrelevant, the salutation was all. When we walked up to the desk of our Frankfurt place, the desk clerk bowed and beamed, the bellman was waiting. Our room had flowers.

Frankfurt was holding its fourth biennial festival of experimental theater and film. That evening we went to a midnight screening and got there early so that we could see the audience. They were mostly young people. As they floated in, chattering in clumps, Laura murmured, "For heaven's sake." I knew what she meant. Except for the language, we might have been in New York. This could have been a Village film house. At that time, 1971, the term "youth revolution" was still used a lot, and everyone knew that it was largely a matter of style. Now I saw that the style was international, was not only in clothes but in ballet – the casual walk, the overdone hug, the seat-slump, the floor-sprawl. I felt again what I had often felt at home. Jealous. I felt that it must have been fun to dress and behave like that. If old-line revolutionaries had devised styles of dress and movement that attracted young people, they might have got further. But the old revolutionaries had only programs, which needed debate and, between countries, translation. Nowadays youth-style was what the fish symbol had been to early Christians.

On my first German visit, I had dealt mostly with older people. Sitting here now in this film theater, I felt that I had slipped closer. It was faintly discomfiting, like being embraced by someone I hardly knew and wasn't sure I liked.

"Well, here I am in Germany," said Laura again. "I guess."

2.

Hamburg is my favorite German city. It has a large lake in its center, as Manhattan has Central Park. It has a tetchy climate, it has mercantile arrogance and the culture of wealth. A New Yorker feels at home.

In Hamburg I got the first benefit of the writing I had been doing for *Die Zeit*, which is published there. I had written about fifteen "letters from New York" and had corresponded often with the editors. Now they welcomed us. Messages and gifts were waiting at our hotel, and the next day we were taken to lunch at a club on the banks of the Alster, the lake in the middle of the city. Our hosts' English shamed my German. Laura considered me fluent in German because I could say "Kellner, ein Pils," but I made sure to speak only English around the *Zeit* people.

The chief arts editor had been a Luftwaffe pilot. After the war he had taught German literature at Oxford. In one person, he embodied my

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dilemma, hate or forgiveness. "You have many admirers among our readers," he said, raising his wine glass in a toast, as I wondered what in the world I was doing in this place and at the same time was excited.

We went to Hamburg theaters as arranged by *Die Zeit*. We were invited to the university by a professor of English whom I had met four years before. He asked me to speak to his seminar in American Literature. One afternoon his assistant called for us at our hotel, drove us to the university, and escorted us to the classroom. The bulletin boards along the corridors, with their announcements of concerts, lectures, meetings, apartments to rent or share, looked exactly like the bulletin boards at Yale, where I was then teaching, only with the English garbled.

The students in the seminar spoke English easily and knew a good deal about American writing, especially modern authors. The conversation was lively, but I chiefly remember some talk afterward. We went for coffee with some of the students, and all of us began talking about teachers, there and in America. A young woman said that one of her professors in another course always wore a blue tie. One day a classmate of hers said wryly, "Always the same damned blue tie," without knowing that the professor had overheard. Next day the professor came in wearing the same blue tie, called on the complaining student to recite, and while the student was reading at length, the professor took off his tie, put it in his right-hand pocket, pulled an identical tie from his left-hand pocket, tied and untied it and put it in his right-hand pocket, pulled another identical tie from his left-hand pocket, tied and untied it, and so on. Ten ties, all blue. The story cheered me, in the light of legends about German professors.

Lübeck is an hour's train ride from Hamburg, and we went up there on a Sunday to see the "Buddenbrooks" house of Thomas Mann. A clean Sunday sky, with scrubbed Baltic air. Lübeck is close to Denmark, and many of the houses, among those that survived the war, look Danish. A medieval old-people's home, the Heiligen-Geist-Hospital, came through the bombings unscarred, an ancient and patient place. The great Marienkirche had been hit. In one corner of the interior were two giant bells that had fallen from their tower in an air raid. They had been left lying on the stone floor, which had cracked under them, and that corner of the church was cut off by an iron railing. A plaque said that the bells had tolled regularly for four hundred years and that they had been left like this as a perpetual reminder of what war does.

All through Germany there were ruins that had been left as memorials. They appalled me, and they angered me when I thought about causes. In a strange way they also saddened me, as if the ruins were my loss, too.

The "Buddenbrooks" house was still there, the eighteenth-century

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façade untouched. The interior was now lawyers and banks. Around the corner was a psychiatrist's office. The master ironist might have smiled.

We went to Lübeck because of Mann, but we discovered marzipan. Lübeck is the marzipan capital of the world. One company, Niederegger, not only makes famous marzipan, it runs a lovely old café in Lübeck, almost Viennese. We went there in mid-afternoon. In a corner, at a dainty small table, sat two stately old ladies, wearing hats. They were having afternoon coffee, sitting erect and conversing regally, as if there were no today. What hats. History was in those hats.

Where were those hats, those stately old ladies, when the bells fell in the Marienkirche?

Our waiter was pleasant, especially so. We noted it because waiters were always pleasant, and this man stood out. German waiters, hotel people, taxi drivers, railway porters were always considerate whether I gave a good tip or a small tip or, in ignorance, no tip at all. Laura said, "I have to admit it. It's the least pushy, grabby country I've ever been in."

But, other than the waiters, there was not much to be said for the restaurants. Coffee was dependably good, as it is dependably bad in America. Wursts were tasty. The beer, except for Czech beer, was unbeatable. But German imagination and taste were not in the kitchen. How could the people who designed the best-looking books in the world enjoy this food? Laura and I couldn't decide which were worse, the run-of-the-mill dishes or the attempts to fancy things up. The food in the few homes we visited was good, but after a few days of German restaurants, we headed for the nearest Italian or Chinese restaurant, of which there were plenty. To hear an Italian speak German is to feel compassion. To hear a Chinese speak it is to be charmed.

3.

Stuttgart is where my grandfather was born. The memory of him didn't overwhelm me when we arrived. Grandpa Kauffmann was one of the least impressive men I have known, a catarrhal cough, a brownish complexion, small stature, and small cigars. Not much more. Still this was the city he came from when he was young. His older brother came much later, in the middle of the 1930s with his wife and their lawyer son, all refugees. That son, my cousin, I remembered more warmly. He had told me of parks and theaters and cafés in Stuttgart. His stories had been so wistful that I almost felt I was returning here.

This, in a newcomer, was doubly foolish. Because there was no "here." There was a place on the map called Stuttgart, a valley surrounded by close green hills. The setting was as pretty as it had always been. We stood on the main street, and there were vineyards sloping down only a few hundred

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yards away. But my grandfather's city, my cousin's city, was no longer here. The grid of streets and avenues was as it used to be, with an occasional patch of buildings that had survived the war. Most buildings were new.

This was true of most of the seven cities that we saw. The question of deserts entirely aside, the Germans had at least paid something on their debts. Just enough was left of the past to show us how much was gone.

We went to the theater and opera in Stuttgart, as we had done in Frankfurt and Hamburg and Düsseldorf and Cologne on our way. I had visited many of the people who worked in those theaters and some film people, too. A few of them knew my name from *Die Zeit* which heightened my sense of homecoming.

Now we decided to rest for a weekend before we pushed on to Munich and Berlin. We rented a car and drove to the Black Forest. What an echoing name, resonant with woodcutters' daughters and wandering princes. In fact the Black Forest was not as beautiful as parts of the Catskills that I know.

Back in Hamburg we had anticipated this weekend of rest, and I had asked the arts editor of *Die Zeit* to suggest a place. He had recommended a hotel in a resort village called Hinterzarten. That hotel was full, and they sent us to a nearby pension run by a couple in their fifties. It was a consciously cute place, the Black Forest equivalent of a brand-new colonial inn in America. The host was lean, strong, erect, quite clearly an ex-military man. His bearing was rigid, his manner crisp. He seemed to be barking commands even when he was being helpful. He touched a susceptible nerve in me. He dominated me utterly whether or not he knew it or wanted it. Even my skimpy German deserted me in his presence. I was cowed.

To the end, almost. When we left, he helped me to load our bags in the car, adjusting sensibly what I had been fiddling with. Then he took his pipe from his mouth, fixed his hawk eyes on me, and spoke his first words in English. "Forget nossing?"

Suddenly he sounded silly and looked ridiculous. I gloated secretly and drove away refreshed.

Munich to me was Wagner, was Hitler. It also was Brecht, the enemy of both those men. In between the appointments and theaters and visits to the huge film studio, we wandered around the city. One morning we came to a section of the old city wall, a tower that had been preserved. On a doorway in the tower a sign said Karl Valentin Museum. Valentin had been a cabaret comedian, gangly and dry, the city's hero, now long dead, whom Brecht had adored and had performed with in his own early years. Here was a museum honoring the irreverence that had fed Brecht's irreverence. A museum to the enemy of the politics that had festered in Munich during his lifetime. We went up the narrow winding stair to a room filled with pho-

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tographs, props and costumes, programs, with a phonograph that kept playing Valentin songs. Everything to keep this dead clown from dying.

The next day we left Munich for Berlin. At the Munich airport we saw again the vending machines for fresh flowers that we had seen in other German airports. Behind banks of locked small glass doors stand bouquets in glasses of water. You choose your bouquet, put a few marks in a slot, and open the door. I said, "A national symbol. German Schönheit and German efficiency combined." I shook my head. "Perfect." Impatiently Laura said, "They're announcing our plane."

4.

The idea of Berlin seems devised by Ionesco. The capital of a country is transposed to a new country cut off from the original country. Then the capital is divided. The eastern section becomes the capital of the old country, and the western section remains part of the old country, which now has a new capital. The wall that divides the old capital is now part of its life. I asked an elderly theater critic in West Berlin what effect the wall had on him. He shrugged. "I take my dog for walks there every day. He makes pee-pee on it."

Laura and I went to a theater the afternoon we arrived. That evening we strolled up the Kurfürstendamm. The neon was as I remembered, and Laura soon noted it, too. The shop signs and large ads were the most attractive I had ever seen. I had read laments about weak postwar artistic imagination. Had it all gone into neon?

At night the neon signs made three German obsessions stand out. Other than the staples, food and drugs and cafés, most of the signs were for *Teppiche* and *Versicherung* and *Pelze*. The Germans are mad for carpets and insurance and furs. "Anyway," said Laura, "the signs make the place less depressing by night."

We went to more theaters and met theater and film people. We went to East Berlin and saw Brecht's Berliner Ensemble in their old ornate theater, an odd home for terse Brechtian drama. The telex friend, who had sent us messages en route, had procured tickets, not easy to get, for the Komische Oper in East Berlin. This theater was run by the renowned Walter Felsenstein. I had read much about Felsenstein's opera productions and was eager to go. Our friend grabbed the only available seats, and we journeyed again to East Berlin. What we saw was Felsenstein's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. It was much inferior to the Broadway production. We enjoyed our friend's embarrassment more than the show.

Our German trip was coming to an end. I reserved the last afternoon in Berlin to visit a place I wanted Laura to see. I had seen it in 1967 and had dreamed of it since. It was a Catholic church in an outlying district,

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Charlottenburg. Maria Regina Martyrum stands near Plötzensee, the prison where many had been executed during the Hitler years and where, in August 1944, the eight German officers found chiefly guilty in the July plot against Hitler were hanged. With piano wire around their necks, they had been strung up to meathooks in the ceiling while a film camera recorded their deaths. Then the film, as ordered, was rushed to Hitler.

Plötzensee was now completely empty. In 1952 the bishop of Berlin had urged that a church be built nearby, and in 1962 it was finished.

It is a quiet, terrifying church. It is modeled on a prison camp. The entrance is an iron gate that opens into a large courtyard. The gate is in a concrete bell tower that suggests a guard tower. The courtyard is enclosed with a concrete wall that looks like a prison wall. At the end of the courtyard is an altar, a plain stone slab set upon what looks like a metal crown of thorns. The church itself is a large, plain, stone box resting on slabs. The interior is plain, too. Light comes through bands of glass high in the walls. Some of the interior walls still bear the marks of the forms in which they were molded so that the concrete looks hammered into place. The whole church is a question, an unrelenting question. We sat there for a while, then left.

That night I dreamed again of the church. I woke early. Laura was still sleeping. We were leaving for Paris that afternoon. I decided to go for a walk before breakfast. I dressed and whispered to her that I was going out and thought she understood.

In the fresh light the city looked falsely young. I walked a few blocks on the Kurfürstendamm and saw the waiters getting the cafés ready. I turned into side streets and wandered. I fought the feeling, fanciful, untrue, that everything looked familiar. I tried not to imagine, not to put myself at the center of this century's history as I walked through the morning streets of the old capital that had made my century's history grotesque. But something had been lurking within me for four years, since my first visit, and it began to rise. As I walked, as the streets began to fill, I admitted it to myself as if I were reluctantly acknowledging an ache.

Part of me wanted to be German. Part of me wanted to share the shame, the inheritance that burdened the best Germans I had met. Everything in my childhood and youth, everything that had been brutalized by the Hitler Germany, the Germany that would have brushed me into the ovens with the back of its hand, all of that earlier German remembrance reached up across the blackness. It was strange, double. I wanted to reclaim what I had lost. And I wanted to share the guilt for that loss. When our plane took off that afternoon, I felt relieved. I was on my way to my home, my only home. Still, in a corner, the ache persisted, the early morning mystery. In one small corner of myself, I felt that I was fleeing.

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POEMS

Adam Zagajewski

DAYBREAK

At daybreak, from the train window I see cities
which sleep left deserted,
open and defenseless like huge animals
lying on their backs.
Through the vast squares, only my thoughts
and a cold wind are wandering,
linen banners faint on the tops of towers,
birds awaken in trees,
in the thick fur-coats of parks
wild cats' eyes gleam.
In shop windows the shy light of morning,
eternal debutante, reverberates;
merry-go-rounds, finally self-possessed, pray
to their invisible center,
Gardens fume like the smoldering ruins of Warsaw,
and the first van has not yet arrived
at the brown wall of the slaughterhouse.
At daybreak cities belong to no one
and have no names.
And I, too, am without a name,
at dawn, when stars pale
and the train speeds up.

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LAVA

And what if Heraclitus and Parmenides
are both correct
and side by side, two worlds exist,
one calm, the other frantic; one arrow
rushes heedlessly; another watches it
with indulgence, the same wave moves and stands still.
Animals are born and die at once,
birch leaves play in the wind, and at that very moment
disintegrate in the rusty cruel flame.
Lava kills and preserves, the heart beats
and is beaten; there was a war and there wasn't,
Jews died, Jews live, cities burned down,
cities stand, love fades, the perpetual kiss,
the wings of hawks have to be brown,
you are still with me though we are no more,
ships sink, sand sings, clouds wander
like wedding veils in decay.
All is lost. So much dazzlement. The hills
descend tenderly, bearing long banners of trees.
Moss inches up a stone churchtower
and its small mouth shyly praises the North.
At dusk, jasmine glows like savage lamps
possessed by their own luminescence.
In a museum, before a somber canvas,
someone's catlike eyes narrow. All is over.
Riders gallop upon black horses, a tyrant composes
a death sentence full of grammatical errors.
Youth turns to nothing in
one day, the faces of girls freeze
into medallions, despair becomes rapture,
and the hard fruits of stars are growing in the sky
like grapes, and beauty endures, shaken, still,
and God is and dies; night returns to us
every evening, and dawn is gray-haired from dew.

Translated from the Polish by Renata Gorczynski and Benjamin Ivry

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Mary Oliver

EVERYTHING

No doubt in Holland,
when van Gogh was a boy,
there were swans drifting
over the green sea
of the meadows, and no doubt
on some warm afternoon
he lay down and watched them,
and almost thought: this is everything.
What drove him
to get up and look further
is what saves this world,
even as it breaks
the hearts of men.
In the mines where he preached,
where he studied tenderness,
there were only men, all of them
streaked with dust.
For years he would reach
toward the darkness.
But no doubt, like all of us,
he finally remembered
everything, including the white birds,
weightless and unaccountable,
floating around the towns
of grit and hopelessness—
and this is what would finish him:
not the gloom, which was only terrible,
but those last yellow fields, where clearly
nothing in the world mattered, or ever would,
but the insensible light.

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Simon Perchik

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Her loom as if some wounds
can never close, are dragged
and the lamb – how soft death is

how white! all at once
it covers the sky
fills with this vague tearing apart

– documents, pages, rags
and she is combing out the lamb
from its fountain and torn again

– her fingers can't close, pulled down
by a waterfall :each strand
the mark on its throat – the lamb

put back together :her child
– over and over she rocks some crib
as if its blanket could break apart

and a little further off the sun
keep warm, nursed on the tiny stream
held in her arms – she sings to it

wringing it – inside, slowly
more tears and the years ahead.

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David Weiss

RECONSTRUCTION

Prior to this the road fell away
between walnut trees or lengthened
between her legs. Rain was falling
and news came in waves over the radio

but we thought it was the heat
and the steaminess of rain which made
us feel that way. That long glance back
over her shoulder never resolved the question:

what do you want now that we're alone?
We wanted some sign which would make her
emergence necessary, into an emergency.
Once it must have been true:

those lips with their words and kisses
opening like the top drawer of a dresser;
those legs parting like clouds through
which we could see what it was like

to fall from such a height: now it is
a matter of perspective, of stepping back
to realize that, as the road winds
towards the stable and the adoring parents,

it, too, is falling from the sky,
and the idea is how to slow it down,
to keep the pageant and its festive dangers
from arriving for as long as humanly possible.

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Jeanne Walker

RECOVERING THE COMMONPLACE

For Bob Perkel

No wonder your juice turned sour.
No wonder the long night rolled up like a mat.
No wonder light returned so furtively
we guessed it mislaid something.

When we woke up
you were too hot to say *mama*.
I lifted you from your crib.
But you were too sick to pee.

When we drove you to the doctor,
rain was falling. No wonder. This is
the way things happen.
In the waiting room, I prayed

the ordinary blue chairs
be places no one's child
could die, had ever died.
Then far away in your eye a light

stirred. *Cup*, *table*, and everything
recalled itself. You uncurled and cried
"Cracker!" "Apple Juice!"
Slowly, like sunrise practicing again

to make another morning, you sat up.
The doctor let you listen
to your heart. He held
his tiny light up to your finger.

It glowed truthful, red. By this time
you had given back your fever
like a toy you'd played with long enough.
You lay on the table baring your face,

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your whole naked chest and penis.
When you peed high into the air
the room was all clarity and dazzle,
as though it were the simplest thing.

Alan Shapiro

TURKEY VULTURES

Always at evening they glide in, thirty or more,
like a gathering night chaff high over the woods
behind the house, with their long wings barely swaying,
banking as they wheel over us till one by one they loop down
into the crabbed maze of the same (always the same)
tall oaks, where the wings now suddenly flared
rustle heavily against the branches as they settle.

Hard not to think of them as waiting, they are so still –
bunched three or four together still as moss, black moss
in the crook of branches, and others alone out at the ends
like fruit weighing them down. It is hard not to think
the grey gauze of the trees behind them, reddish leaf mould
and pale fungus on the ground, and even the house itself –

porch, wood frame, sills and floors – are darkened by them,
quickened with their dark, and that soon they will be
the single watching of the night perched all around us
as we go from room to room, to draw the curtains,
seeing the same wing flutter up and hover
over every light that flickers to go on.

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Anthony Robbins

PATRIOT WITHOUT PAROLE

Low and true in the levantine,
the tyrian, the phoenician sky, the misgiven moon will assert
itself, haggard again, ready to be eaten out again,
to be filled with other-speech, to become, say, the pale victim of oneness,
of the obsession of oneness. The void around it will be perfect,
black slicked with grisly blue: a fist squeezing the moon
for significance, and into purer, hotter, more pallorous
death. The rock will be shining, the moon pulsing deep
inside the fist.
The soldier will look down at the man and take his hand
out of the wound, tightly clutching the sponge that will go
with him then, always, poised, partly filled with blood.

A. F. Moritz

TO HIS SUBJECT MATTER

So I'm left
to exalt your mere deaths equally
with those that were most greatly mourned,
your lives that would be forgotten
with the vanished ones that the living still most long for,
the ones they still try to follow,
looking on the ground, reading the welts and crushed
pebbles and grass, ruin, as if some ancient passing
footfall had blessed them.

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There's nothing in you,
minor versions of great sorrow,
some small confusions
of mighty self-contradiction and bafflement:

the wrecking storm, brilliant and vast, scarred,
healed by lightning and its quick decayings;
it passed through here a life ago
or in our sleep and gave its memory
to the frigid, rain-whipped,

cowering. . . Leave me alone, you, of no
imaginable good, with my small part and
never-to-be-repeated view of power.

Karl Kirchwey

THE DIVA'S FIRST SONG (WHITE'S HOTEL, LONDON)

The windows have their watered silk
Hangings: my voice hardly comes back

To me at all. The carpet's maze
Of brilliant tufted wool allows

My feet to linger when a note
Wanders chromatic or is covered;

And with the fine tip of a sable
Brush, these walls have been veined like marble

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(Though they are wood) or dressed in plumes
And eyes like peacock feathers, flames

Of varnish like an instrument,
Braided like hair, parted like raiment,

Given every texture but the knot
Of what they are: and this is art.

Each morning the maid knocks and fills
Three small and different-colored vials

By the gold taps with lotions for me.
By dusk I've had my bath; they're empty.

I rest and watch the comforter's
Embroidered surf of fruit and pairs

Of birds swarm underneath the lead
Glass clinging in its faceted

Bunches that stains the bedboard wall
With a soft rainbow aureole.

As I once saw on Murano,
After the wobble and the glow,

A rondure and a clarity
Grow from the breath of men, so I

Practice the drop and gust of line
Until at last it is made clean

Of me. As in glass facing glass,
My image almost disappears.

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John R. Reed

SWITCH

Suddenly I'm on the losing side with
those disheveled troops in styrofoam slippers
and unironed robes whose keepers wheel them
to be hefted like beef onto the butcher's
block. Tests before the cadaver's final
trial. Probed and poked in my feverish bed I
feel like kneaded dough rising to an un-
wholesome loaf. The doctor makes the curtain sing
on its rail to ring in our inverse show
where I'm the prisoner telling yet once more
the little that he knows, as though that will
change his interrogators' minds and let him
go, as though there were no war marching up
and down the halls sore hungry to be fed.

Laurel Trivelpiece

POLONIUS REVISITED

More to carry, less to take –
your hands get full of that,
and you notice certain truths
are sticky on the tongue.

You find, like the bird,
you must beat the wings off
your butterfly before swallowing.

But some foolish assumptions
sink away in the gravel,
so much sump water.

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Luck in the long run a hat in a tree;
you pick and you patch – snatch
at the colors of whispers,

Dimes in the dust; but a stillness
still sweetens the sky, and you know it,
calling home over the water,

Red leaves flying loosely around you,
and the cold collecting
where you meant to light.

When you come to the end of your stones,
they'll sack you up sideways to go,
now your disguise slips from your bones,
chalk to flash on in the dark.

Emery George

THE FANS

It's no longer purely a matter of caution.
They've long since given up on safety, I'm sure.
Now it's terror in the halls of the institute;
the old, the blind get tangled on the cords.
See those two tall, old-fashioned standalones?
The blind lady lets out her flowing yellow hair;
as on a bridge of gleaming, revolving steel
after rain, she slips on a ray of light.

Sitting upstairs, she waits for her lovers,
caught among the thorns, clinging like ivy,
you explain, while we see white tile walls, shuffling
patients, hear whispers, a fluttering kitchen door.
What will make them well? Is it gentle waiting
in the wings, while that lion sound goes on,
and nothing will stop these plants from bending, bending?
Or is it constraining acts? How are we to stay clear?

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Look at her now: she's back. Her scarred expression
suggests peripheral vision. She gropes for sound.
It's written on her face: she thinks of dry, sunlit
skeletons rustling in the softest breeze.
And look at those three. A strange disease
consumes them. In the early stages, thought
walks straight as a street. Later, a fine curvature,
like earth's, shows. Now at the last, ideas
curl, like fingers, like a drying autumn leaf.
A breeze wings your skull. Look, so that they don't notice.
Just watch them walk past, out of averted eyes, as their
wishful thoughts get caught in the whirring blades.

Nadya Aisenberg

THE SELF TALKS TO THE SELF

After you kissed the orange, pulpy fruit of the sun
you expected to meet Neruda strolling down the avenue of palms –

that he'd transfix you with a white stare from the guano islands?
Poor child, how could you know that was my dream, too?

Now it's apparent why you sulked for so many years,
the equal of thunder and lightning.

Stay. Wait for the throbbing crickets at dusk,
a commotion as loud as your heart.

You didn't feel the earth's deep tremor,
the horizonless ocean, pouring.

How could you know decades later
the chilly interpretive schemes begin,

cramped glass flowers that used to run wild.

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Who pays for us all?

When I was young I painted myself a nymph,
with flowing draperies and crimped, Botticellean hair.

Flora, Primavera, where are your colorist dreams,
your wreathed and garlanded clothes?

Now I stand rooted by misery's captive stare,
unable to lower my eyes. The plain and the bare

speak their radical truth. On the earthern floor,
birth, sickening, and death pass in the smoke of cook-fires.

We carry our gods piggy-back, small creatures
with reptilian feet and forked tongues:

Put me down. Pick me up.
I could wish it warmer.

David Solway

JELLYFISH

They are the bane
of ignorant swimmers:
a single brush
is an afternoon of pain.

Shaped shapelessness,
they are a food for nothing –
clutter the shore,
a queasy, languid mess –

that calmly come

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coagulate of the depths,
half substance, half
participial jetsam.

Step gingerly,
scoop them out with buckets
to splat on rocks,
spear them with sticks, and see

the jellyfish
dribble into nothing
or close on them-
selves with a gluey squish

as if they felt
no inconvenience
in being dead,
as if they liked to melt.

In appearance
yielding to the elements,
they drift and drift
in aspic tolerance

of wind and wave,
yet cannot be deflected
from the floating
dumb directedness they have.

It's this absence
of desire but perfect
self-extension,
as they flex, expand and tense,

with the sea's will,
this pure ideology
untenanted
by wish, mere push and pull,

that puzzles us –

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although they have a blind
kind of beauty,
these filaments of sea-pus.

We can see right
through them, we can scoop and spear,
burn them in sun,
ravel their pink and white;

we can avoid
their myriad poisonous shoals
a day or two,
so intricately deployed;

but in the end
the jellyfish encircle
every island,
ring every beach, distend

their colloid net
round every swimmer, and sting
with even less
need or hunger than regret.

Alan Shaw

BERLIN

To C. S.

A Europe's demon slipped into the grave,
The tempest in these regions reached its height.
Now, in the angles of the floodlit night,
The future lingers like a frozen wave.
Our side is neon; pink-haired youth who crave
More welfare, swearing they will never fight;
Some cherish it, this Babylon the bright,
While others can see nothing left to save.

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The other side is silence. What's the power
We feel in it, my friend? Is it the loss
A weary singer might feel in the dawn
When "Mack the Knife" has captured half the town?
We linger at the window, and across
The shark's teeth shines the giant broadcast tower.

Andrew Harvey

FIVE RUMI QUATRAINS

In this old house
The rain has rotted
My heart is in ruin
Love, enter, or let me leave.

*

'Blood must flow' he said
'For the garden to flower
And the heart that loves me
Is a wound without shield'

*

How do I live when you're not here?
Pain lives me, a wound speaks with my mouth.
And when you return? Only you know
How you hollow me out and dance in the hollow.

*

I pull you to me by a knowledge beyond words
You think we're meeting for the first time?
I know Him in you, I see you completely
You've eaten His food; the crumbs are on your lips

*

With one silent laugh
You tilted the night
And the garden ran with stars.

Editor's Note: "Five Rumi Quatrains" are excerpted from Andrew Harvey's "re-creations" of Rumi's poems, *Speaking Flame*, to be published in February by Meeramma Publications. Copyright ©1989 Andrew Harvey.

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Jeffrey Herf

THE POLISH SPRING

In 1964, the American new left adopted the slogan "a free university in a free society." In that time and place, it was a highly inappropriate slogan. We already enjoyed free universities in a free society. But here at Jagiellonian University in Cracow in spring 1989 it is appropriate for us to express the hope that you will attain a free university in a free society.

This year is the bicentennial of the French Revolution, an event which casts its spell on Poland and on the United States. It gave to modern politics the idea of revolution, of a sudden, dramatic, and violent – above all violent – break with the past. From this break was supposed to emerge a wholly new society and new man and new woman. Today, after the catastrophes of twentieth-century revolutions, the lustre of the revolutionary idea has worn off in the West, not least of all in France itself. Nevertheless, outsiders may be tempted to interpret change in Poland in light of the two-centuries-old image of revolution, the sudden and violent break that denotes the "before" and "after."

You know better. Assuming that the changes of this spring become a permanent feature of Polish politics and society, the Polish spring of 1989 will cast its spell around the world as well. Your country has shown itself and the world that meaningful change from dictatorship to greater democracy can take place without "the revolution," without political murder, without the myth of human beings remade, and without dehumanizing hatred justifying violence. What message could be more important to people now seeking to free themselves from dictatorship? How much better it would be, if Poland of 1989 were to displace France of 1789 in the political imagination of those all over the world who seek to displace dictatorship and poverty with democracy and economic well-being.

In the iconography of politics, you have replaced the violent mob and machine gun with the conversation and the conference table as effective means of political change. You have shown that there is a heroism and

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intelligence to a policy of many small steps, of moderation, and of talking rather than shooting. You have demonstrated political possibility where cynical realists would abandon hope. These are images and messages that need to be heard, especially where the romance of 1789 and 1917 has not yet expired. So at the outset, I want to express our admiration for your courage and persistence, and our congratulations for your accomplishment.

All of us who have come to talk to you this week share a youthful leftist radicalism from which we have distanced ourselves. We have "deradicalized" ourselves. That means that we, too, came to reject the images of 1789 and 1917 for the more prosaic and humane practices of classical political liberalism, practices such as talking, arguing, compromising, and tolerating those who disagree. On the path of deradicalization, we read a great deal, just as we had on our previous path of radicalization. The difference, of course, is that we read better books the second time around, books like Czeslaw Milosz's *The Captive Mind* and *Native Realm*, and Leszek Kolakowski's *Main Currents of Marxism*, and his superb response to the British and American new left of the 1960s, "My Correct Views on Everything." Both Milosz and Kolakowski, in piercing the totalitarian faith in History and the total reshaping of human beings at the hands of a political project, found common ground with deradicalizing American intellectuals of the 1950s, and with us deradicalizing intellectuals of the 1970s and 1980s.

Our intellectual debts to the Polish struggle against totalitarianism began long before 1989. In the 1960s, when Jean-Paul Sartre was setting the intellectual fashion and "revolutionary violence" was in vogue, it was Milosz, Kolakowski, and other Polish intellectuals who came to the defense of the then out-of-fashion liberal values of European civilization. In the 1960s, when Western intellectuals were turning against liberal values of tolerance and peaceful change, Polish and Eastern European intellectuals reinvigorated those traditions. In the early 1980s, when many Western intellectuals, especially in West Germany, Britain, and the United States, found it difficult to make moral distinctions between "both superpowers," Solidarity was a constant reminder that the issue of peace could not be separated from the issue of freedom. When these same intellectuals took political freedom for granted, dissidents from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were a constant reminder of how precious it is. Now, let us hope, political realities will catch up with the temporarily suppressed but never extinguished sense of European civilization. This "common European home" stretches across the Atlantic to include the United States. It is really a common Western home, though its values have been institutionalized most firmly in Western Europe and the United States.

We Americans with our "second thoughts" about the new left have

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drawn conclusions about capitalism, democracy, and the role of the United States in international politics that parallel some of the thinking in Cracow, the center of political and economic liberalism in Poland. The memories of Auschwitz-Birkenau that have haunted us must haunt you as well, offering yet another common ground on which a freer and more democratic Poland can reach out to the United States, and to Israel. It is to this common ground, to these glimmers of hope after so much catastrophe, that I will now turn.

Capitalism and Democracy

Discussion of dissidence in Eastern Europe in recent years has understandably concentrated on the realization of human rights and political freedom. If these rights continue to be realized, the issue of how politics and economics are related to one another will move closer to center stage. You are and will be faced with having to decide what you think about capitalism. For the past century in the West, many intellectuals, both inside and outside the Marxist tradition, assumed that capitalism was a barrier to the realization of genuine democracy because political institutions merely reflected the interests of dominant classes. For leftist intellectuals in the United States and Western Europe one of the appeals of East European dissidence and opposition, including Solidarity, was that such movements would bring into being the long-hoped-for "third way" of blending socialism and democracy. If by socialism we mean only "social democracy," as practiced in Western Europe or in the Democratic Party in the United States, then, of course, it is perfectly compatible with parliamentary democracy. But we deradicalized intellectuals concluded that if socialism meant state planned economies, then it certainly was not compatible with democracy.

Max Weber, writing in 1919 with Lenin and the Bolsheviks in mind, argued that expropriation of the means of production by the state would give it unparalleled power over society. The superstructure would come to dominate the base. Elimination of independent centers of economic power and decision-making in society would eliminate an indispensable source of countervailing power to the state. Weber insisted that either socialism would be consistent, in which case it would end in dictatorship, or it would evolve into social democracy. However, if it became social democracy, it would have to come to terms with the central hate object of Western intellectuals: capitalism.

Capitalism is not lovely. It does not generate a heroic ethos, at least one that appeals to intellectuals. It can bring out the worst in human beings. It can be heartless. Its impact on culture has been a mixture of support and corruption. It does generate inequality. A society totally organized around the market is a destructive utopia, one which erodes a common set of principles

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that every polity requires in order to address its problems. But for all these unlovely qualities, it is the only economic system compatible with the existence of pluralist democracy in which political parties can peacefully win political power and no less peacefully agree to give up political power.

Capitalism is a necessary but not sufficient condition for pluralist democracy because, as Frederick Hayek argued, it is an economic system which shares political liberalism's attitude toward knowledge. Capitalism and free markets rest on millions and millions of uncoordinated decisions made by individuals. The spontaneous and uncoordinated nature of these decisions maximizes the amount of intelligence in a society. It is impossible for any centrally planned economy to match the creativity unleashed by markets and independent capitalists. In a similar fashion, pluralist democracy maximizes intelligence and knowledge by rejecting the notion of an omniscient state in favor of political competition between political parties. Just as a capitalist economy derives its dynamism from competition, so the dynamism and strength of democracies comes from competition between political parties. Only where political parties stand a chance of losing power in an election can the process of political learning be peacefully institutionalized. In both politics and economics, stagnation is the product of the absence of effective competition.

Capitalist economies are also compatible with totalitarian rule as in Nazi Germany, and with authoritarian rule, as in some of the Asian capitalist economies today. However, few historians in Western Europe and the United States today would defend the Comintern's view of the 1930s, and the still current East German view that National Socialism was a product of monopoly capitalism. The American historian Henry Turner, in *Big Business and the Rise of Hitler*, has effectively laid to rest the notion that Hitler was a tool of big business. In a book called *Reactionary Modernism*, I have argued along lines similar to historians such as Karl Bracher, George Mosse, and Fritz Stern that Nazi ideology, not German capitalism, accounted for the racist war waged in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, as well as for the Holocaust against the Jews.

From a glance at the variety of regimes in German history – constitutional monarchy, republic, totalitarian dictatorship, and parliamentary democracy – that coexisted with a capitalist economy, it is clear that no necessary connection exists between capitalism and dictatorship. On the contrary, every pluralist democracy with meaningful, peaceful competition between political parties in the last century has coexisted with a capitalist economy. Because of the dispersal of power in society it brings about, capitalism is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for democracy.

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Capitalism and Culture

A second issue I'd like to raise concerns capitalism and its cultural prerequisites. The Polish opposition has dealt with the issue of a democratic political culture. I ask if you have also examined the question of cultural prerequisites of capitalism. You need no lessons from us about human rights, or the value of pluralism, and certainly not about the value of elections. One question I have about Poland's future is whether or not is has a culture that is conducive to economic growth, as well as to political democracy. In Britain, P. T. Bauer, and in the United States, Peter Berger and David Landes, have placed renewed emphasis on the importance of the cultural prerequisites of economic growth. They all ask a most embarrassing question: "Why are some nations rich and others poor?"

Since Rosa Luxembourg and Lenin developed their theories of imperialism, and since the coining of the term "third world" at the Bandung conference of 1955, many development economists thought they had the answer. "They," meaning the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, were poor, because "we," the capitalist countries of Europe, the United States, and Japan were rich. Conversely, "we," were rich because we had exploited "them." Proposals for global redistribution in the form of a new world economic order in the United Nations rest on this tale of good and evil. From the end of World War II to the 1970s, this myth of a unitary Third World remained intact, until it fell to pieces under the impact of the OPEC cartel and the Asian economic miracle.

P.T. Bauer, in works such as *Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion* and *Reality and Rhetoric*, and Peter Berger, in his recent book, *The Capitalist Revolution*, have criticized the idea of a "third world." The idea of "the third world," they argue, is condescending and racist, ignoring as it does the multiplicity of over one hundred different nation states. By ignoring this multiplicity, such a blanket notion obscures the embarrassing fact that these one hundred or so countries are not equally poor. Instead, they mark points on a gradation of wealth. Moreover, some of the wealthiest are those that had most contact with former colonial powers, while most of the poorest were never colonized at all. Rather than seek the causes for their economic misery or success in the international economic system, Bauer and Berger examine the specific, national economic cultures to understand why some nations are richer than others.

The short and simple answer is that where governments allow markets, encourage entrepreneurship, and foster private investment decisions and the free movement of labor, economic growth takes place. Where, on the other hand, government bureaucrats have tried to plan economies, discourage entrepreneurship, concentrate investment decisions in the state, and pre-

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vent the free movement of labor, economic growth does not take place. The phenomenal economic success of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong has been a huge embarrassment for Latin American intellectuals accustomed to blaming all their problems on Yankee imperialism, and to African leaders whose visions of state socialism have crumbled in war and economic disaster. Today, the argument that socialism denies freedom in order to bring about economic growth is in shambles. It cannot offer either.

The work of Bauer, Berger, and Landes raises the issue of how a nation's cultural attitudes towards capitalism affect its capacity for economic growth. One of the most famous hypotheses of modern social science was Max Weber's argument that there was an affinity between the spirit of capitalism and Protestantism. He began with the observation that in Europe, capitalism was most advanced in those places where Protestantism was strongest. His explanation was that the Protestantism fostered an ethic of individualist asceticism which legitimated in the eyes of believers the accumulation of capital. It broke through Catholicism's disdain for money-making and capitalist enterprise. Today, Berger argues that the Asian capitalist economies benefit from an Eastern form of asceticism which initially lacks the individualism of Western capitalism. In both cases, what is decisive is a cultural outlook which breaks through traditional hostility to the methodical accumulation of wealth and its use for long-term investments.

I've digressed a bit into this discussion because the historical moment of political change in Eastern Europe is placing the distinctive features of the countries of Eastern Europe into sharper relief. "Eastern Europe," like the term "Third World," gives way to more tangible historical communities, to the individual nation-states of Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. The question for each of these states, including Poland, is what cultural resources exist on which a thriving and dynamic economy can be built. If newspaper reports are to be believed, there are more Marxists in Western universities than in Poland, but assuming a few remain here, Marxism is an important cultural barrier to economic growth. Yet European anticapitalism is much older than Marxism. One of its oldest homes is the Catholic Church. Internationally, the Church has generally spoken more about redistribution of wealth than it has about the conditions for its creation. How Polish Catholicism responds to capitalist economics will be a central question in your future.

How will people who have participated in a movement entitled "Solidarity" respond to the quite different, at times contrary, pulls of individualism and competition? Where, in your national culture, are the resources for economic individualism which every capitalist economy requires? I should think you would want to talk a great deal to people from Catholic

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Italy and Spain, both of which emerged from dictatorships, have experienced rapid economic growth, and have managed to reconcile Catholic traditions with the development of capitalism. How have they become richer without losing their souls? The historical and contemporary evidence is that countries do not become wealthier if they have a national culture hostile to capitalism. The issue of how you reconcile Western political and economic liberalism with Poland's national culture is as important as any you face.

I would like to make one last point about capitalism and culture. Daniel Bell, one of America's foremost sociologists of the postwar era, in works such as *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* and *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, has reiterated an important point made by Tocqueville, John Stuart Mill, Emile Durkheim and a host of other social theorists: Capitalism as an economic system may undermine values that serve to hold a society together and that create a basis for defining shared sacrifice and just reward. Our budget deficit is a monument to the erosion of a shared national culture upon which our government could ask us all to carry our fair share of taxation. Unfortunately, George Will has been one of the few American conservative and centrist intellectuals in the past decade to point out that the American people are undertaxed, not overtaxed, in relation to the tasks they want government to perform. The root of this undertaxation, as great liberals such as Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill understood, was the deficiency in a common culture raising individual concerns beyond those of self-interest. My point is that a functioning capitalist economy requires a culture whose origins do not lie in capitalism, and which preserves values beyond those of self-interest.

In this sense, you may very well be able to turn your Catholic traditions, and – who knows – maybe even elements of your socialist traditions into a set of national values that address political issues, such as protection of the global environment, that the market alone will not address. Capitalism, unlike communism, does not promise an end to politics. The politics of countries have made capitalism rather different in each. Contrary to the rhetorical flourishes of the *Communist Manifesto*, according to which capitalism would eliminate all national differences in favor of one universal culture, it has everywhere born the stamp of the national cultures and polities in which it has emerged. Polish capitalism would be quite different from capitalism in the United States, Japan, or West Germany.

I can summarize what I've said as follows: If you want democracy, over a long period of time, and if you want to improve the standard of living in this country, you must, sooner or later, develop a capitalist economy. Conversely, if you do not develop a capitalist economy, the democracy for which you have struggled so courageously will not be secure. But, if you do

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find yourself living with capitalism, your own precapitalist or noncapitalist traditions will be very important in addressing the political dilemmas that even the best functioning capitalism cannot resolve.

Peace and Freedom in Europe

I would now like to turn to questions of international politics, in particular to the impact of the *asymmetry* of democracy and dictatorship, and the impact of this asymmetry on relations between states. There is an argument, which I assume you have heard, according to which the postwar order has been the best of all possible worlds. The postwar order, in this view, "solved" the German question. Before 1945, Germany was too strong, especially in regard to the many weak governments to her East. If the United States had left Europe after 1945, or if a neutral, reunified Germany had emerged, there would have been a power vacuum in Central Europe which would have been filled by the Soviet Union. The division of Germany into two Germanies prevented the emergence of a Germany that was too strong or too weak.

While the division of Germany upset the Germans, it calmed the nerves of the neighbors that German armies had invaded in 1941 and 1939. Unfortunately, this elegant solution to the German question was purchased at the price of freedom in Eastern Europe. Like the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the postwar order has preserved peace at the price of the nonsatisfaction of the desires of the small powers of Eastern Europe. But peace is more than Europe could claim in the first half of the century. A free Eastern Europe, it was said, would reopen the German question and bring us back once again to cycles of instability and war. Who knew what the ethnic and national conflicts of Eastern Europe would produce? Just as the United States "pacified" Western Europe to such an extent that the French and West Germans became friends, so the Soviet Union united Eastern Europe in antagonism to itself. What, such analysts ask, would happen if the big bullies left town? Would the local citizens open up old quarrels that could draw the great powers into a fight? So, while Western politicians express delight about freedom in Eastern Europe, some also quietly wonder how it can grow without destabilizing the postwar peace.

Such perspectives are in line with the balance of power tradition: peace requires satisfaction of the great powers, if necessary at the expense of the small powers. In times of great political change, geopolitics reminds us that states are "cold monsters" of international politics, but it does so too often without appreciating the importance of the nature of regimes in question. As Raymond Aron put it in his very important work, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*, the essential point about Athens and Sparta was

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not that there were two great powers but what they concretely were. Democracies do go to war, but not with one another. In the twentieth century, no fully functioning democracies have gone to war with one another.

This has been the case because democracies share both values and social and political transparency. They pride themselves on openness, and this openness "builds confidence," to use a much overused term. The existence of dictatorship in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, far from being a source of postwar stability, has been the primary source of tension in Europe. The "peace" movements of the early 1980s in Western Europe equated both superpowers because of their possession of nuclear weapons, but these movements neglected the differences in their political regimes. They separated the issue of peace in Europe from that of freedom in Eastern Europe. They were wrong on both counts. Democratization of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union reinforces, rather than undermines, the stability of peace in Europe. Democracies can never fully trust dictatorships because the latter make or try to make themselves invulnerable to outside influence, while seeking to influence democracies, which are open to such pressures. Regimes that do not respect the human rights of their own citizens, and that do not have an institutionalized free and open public debate about their foreign and defense policies, will always arouse in democracies mistrust that no arms control agreement can ever fully overcome. Because this *asymmetry of regimes* is so important, democratization of dictatorships, far from being a threat to peace, promises to place it on a more secure foundation.

During the American engagement in the war in Vietnam, the Euromissile dispute of the early 1980s, and the recent controversies over Central America, public debate took place only in the democracies, in the United States and Western Europe. Neither the North Vietnamese, the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact governments, and more recently the Sandinistas, faced effective pressures from a public debate at home. North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris, Soviet negotiators in Geneva, and the Sandinistas in Managua were able to take the political offensive and fight their battles in the public opinion of their democratic adversaries. In each case, the vices of dictatorship became strategic virtues, while the virtues of democracy became potential strategic vices.

But it is important not to overstate the case or to underestimate the powers of democracies. Democratic governments have formidable powers, powers often underestimated by friends and adversaries. The growth of democracy and freedom in Eastern Europe has a potentially profound impact on international politics in Europe. Public debate over foreign policy in the Soviet Union, in Poland and Hungary is potentially one of the most important changes in international politics since World War II. The mere existence of a

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Polish parliament free to debate foreign and defense policy offers the opportunity for ending the asymmetrical pressures on democratic and dictatorial regimes of the postwar era. Public debate, an inquiring press, governments accountable to parliaments mean that the Polish and Hungarian governments will have to justify their policies at home, and that the Soviet Union will have to be accountable to its alliance partners in Europe. We do not come to Cracow to call for apocalyptic and pointless gestures about dissolving the blocs. But the normalization of public debate over your own foreign and defense policies would be a most welcome change from the postwar system. The character of regimes, more than weapon systems alone, is decisive in how states relate to one another.

The strictly geopolitical approach is too narrow. It cannot adapt to political change. Forty-five years ago, it would have been hard to imagine a democratic West Germany, not to mention a democratic Italy, Portugal, and Spain. In 1945, who would have predicted that France and West Germany would be the closest of allies, or West German *Ostpolitik*? More freedom and democratization in Poland and Eastern Europe, and in the Soviet Union, should they continue, can be a stabilizing factor for peace in Europe because it increases trust between states. How, for example, can West European democracies fully trust Warsaw Pact countries, so long as political opposition in regard to all questions, including foreign and defense policy, is not permitted? Imagine how different East-West politics might look with free elections, functioning parliaments with effective power, a free and skeptical press, and public opinion and public opinion polls, in East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and the Soviet Union? If that were to be the case, the basic asymmetry of regimes of the postwar peace would be surmounted. Public controversy and debate over foreign and defense policy would take place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, no less than in Western Europe and the United States. The pressures on governments to compromise would, for the first time, be equal. I look forward to seeing the expression on the Soviet negotiator's face as he or she faces critical questions from Soviet and East European journalists asking why the Soviet Union is being so stubborn and unreasonable in negotiations with the West.

I think there is a tacit understanding in the United States that deployments of American intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Western Europe in the fall of 1983 was a turning point in postwar history. They meant the defeat of the Breshnev-Gromyko-Andropov effort to drive the United States out of Europe through a policy of accumulating ever more military force in the form of the SS-20 arsenal. That defeat led the Soviet Union to reassess its policy, and, in 1987, to accept the famous "zero-zero" option offered by President Reagan in November 1981 which the Russians had previously

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denounced as a propaganda ploy. The INF treaty eliminating medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe is the best evidence that diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union improve when the West is consistently firm about preserving a balance of military forces.

A dissolution of the Western Alliance would be a severe, perhaps fatal, blow to prospects for greater freedom and democracy in Eastern Europe. A neutralist Western Europe without Atlanticist ties to the United States would be divided, weak, and unable to influence developments in Eastern Europe if the Soviet Union did not want it to do so. Hopes for continued democratization in Eastern Europe rest on a continuation of the Atlantic Alliance. Just as the Western Alliance was decisive for the Westernization of West Germany, so can it contribute to the political and moral strengthening of Western traditions in what is now called Eastern Europe. Mikhail Gorbachev is right to speak of a common European home, but the common Western values resting on the dignity of individuals and political freedom have found their home in a Western Europe. The facts of political, moral, and cultural tradition outweigh those of geographic proximity in thinking through what a common European home is. Without doubt, it stretches across the Atlantic.

Whether the Atlantic Alliance continues depends as much on decisions made in London and Bonn, in particular, as in Washington. It is not at all out of the realm of possibility that a combination of Gorbachev's arms control initiatives with a Labor government in Britain, and even more important, a Social-Democratic-Green government in West Germany, could lead to irreparable divisions, and an American exit from Western Europe. An influential part of the West German intellectual and political elites have already convinced themselves that the Soviet Union poses no threat at all, while focusing their criticism on the United States, and on the centrality of West Germany's Western ties. I would urge you to seek contact with that beleaguered but determined part of the West German intellectual and political establishment which retains Adenauer's wisdom that only a firmly Western-oriented West Germany could lend assistance to strivings for freedom and democracy in Eastern Europe.

Poland and Israel

Speaking here in Cracow, less than one hundred kilometers from Auschwitz- Birkenau, it is important to say we assume that you who defend principles of political freedom will also be loyal to the claims of memory, the memories of the Holocaust of European Jewry. No task could be more urgent in the creation of a democratic political culture in Poland than a truthful and complete recollection of the Jewish catastrophe. If they are not already translated into Polish, I would urge you to translate the great postwar histo-

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riography on the Holocaust, such as works by Lucy Dawidowicz and Raul Hilberg, and the essays by Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel. At Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Birkenau today, school children and visitors should be told the clear, unambiguous truth about the destruction of European Jewry, rather than the euphemisms of the official interpretations of "victims of fascism," interpretations which themselves are an enduring inheritance of European anti-Semitism.

Speaking honestly about the past has consequences for your country's foreign policy today. Assuming that democratization in your country proceeds as we all hope it does, Poland will become even more of an actor in world politics, a state with its own foreign policy. I would make a plea that as soon as possible, a freer and more democratic Poland would restore diplomatic ties with Israel. It is wrong, morally wrong, for this country, whose three million Jews were murdered by the Nazis, to participate in the world's hostility to Israel. As you emerge as a state that can speak with its own voice, I hope that you will take every opportunity to tell the PLO what successes a policy of compromise, of many small steps, and moderation can bring. Who knows better than Poles and Jews what devastation fanatics produce? As you have struggled for the right for free elections, I hope your government will urge the Palestinians not to throw away yet another opportunity to participate in elections, and to solve their problems through peaceful compromise. With your accomplishments, you are able more than ever to consign Poland's anti-Semitic tradition to the past. In 1989, your affinities with Israel include not only the darkest days of Polish and Jewish history. As you move toward democracy it makes no sense at all for your country not to have good relations with the only liberal democracy in the Middle East.

We deradicalized American intellectuals with our "second thoughts" about the new left of the 1960s share with you a fresh appreciation of a Western tradition of freedom and equality. It is a common heritage. Wherever people value conversation and round tables over violence and hatred, they will cherish the Polish spring of 1989.

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Karen Wilkin

AT THE GALLERIES

Those of us who worry that art is turning wholly into fashion, literature, sociology, or self-advertisement found a good deal to reassure us this fall. *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism*, at the Museum of Modern Art, and *Velázquez*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, were both splendid shows that made their points by allowing art to speak for itself instead of being treated as illustration of theory. Many other shows made it clear that "straight" painting and sculpture are alive and well, and even suggested that staying power – as opposed to modishness – is a virtue.

In September and October, a miniature retrospective of Kenneth Noland's paintings and a selection of Jules Olitski's spray paintings of the 1960s offered opportunities to reevaluate work that assumes art can address the whole being visually, without rhetoric. The Noland show, which inaugurated Salander-O'Reilly Galleries' sumptuous new space, included works from the 1950s to the present. I should say immediately that I am not an impartial observer; I've recently completed a monograph on Noland and probably came to the exhibition with more preconceptions than I care to admit. But seeing again pictures from Noland's celebrated series, the "Circles," the "Chevrons," and the "Stripes," simply reaffirmed how good they are and how original. Their unpredictable color, iconic directness, lucidity and sheer beauty – to use an unfashionable word – were as exhilarating as when they were first shown.

Noland's newest work, at first sight, seems to repudiate his past. The weightless, uninflected color and the rationally ordered structure of the earlier pictures have vanished, as has the look of their having magically come into being, as though Noland had made perception and feeling visible on canvas without recourse to touch. The new works are built, as much as painted, made of discrete panels, often irregularly shaped, played against each other and against colored plexiglass bars. Surface is newly important; there's ample evidence of Noland's hand in rich passages of thick and thin, opaque and transparent paint. Although Noland describes making the series as "sculpting with color," they read not as reliefs but as paintings, albeit dense and extraordinarily *present* ones. It's impossible to assign priority to shape or to

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surface or to color. Each element seems to have determined every other, and the result is both surprising and inevitable.

The recent constructions make us view Noland's earlier works in new ways. The shaped pictures of the 1970s, for example – irregular polygons with bands of color that both reassert and challenge the declarative shape that supports them – seem even more "sculptural" when seen with Noland's newest pictures; they are as much about altering our faith in Euclidian geometry as they are about particular configurations of color. Even the "Circles," which once seemed to be the antithesis of Abstract Expressionism's juicy, all-stops-out approach because they were thinly painted, symmetrical and distanced, now appear to be as much about touch and paint's ability to flow as they are about color relationships and intervals.

Noland's new paintings prove to be logical fulfillments of everything in his work that preceded them, as if he had turned the disembodied bars of his "Chevrons" and "Stripes" into real, tangible objects that could be arranged and cut into, in new ways. The recent works have vaguely architectural associations, possibly because of their modular structure, but they don't look specifically like anything to do with building. At the same time, because of their human scale, they are curiously hieratical and confrontational. Noland says he thinks of them as being like vertical Cubist figures, but their associations are wider-ranging than that.

They are odd pictures, a little raunchy, with their almost-garish color and clusters of plastic bars, yet in the context of the earlier work, they make perfect sense. Noland is no less the cool classicist that he has always been, but he is now admitting to his paintings much that he excluded in the past: the mark of his hand, for example, or evidence of the picture's evolution. The retrospective at Salander-O'Reilly not only reiterated Noland's importance in the past, but proved that he is still challenging himself, testing himself against his earlier work and striving to push on from there.

Jules Olitski's pictures at André Emmerich Gallery looked astonishingly fresh, exciting and contemporary, worth looking at in their own right, quite apart from their associations with a more optimistic time for dedicated modernists. Olitski's expanses of radiant color still make us pay attention. How is it possible for a painting to have so little in it and still be so compelling, so evocative? In fact, Olitski's apparently "simple" pictures, with their empty centers and sparsely distributed edge-drawing, are more complex than they appear at first sight. It takes time for the eye to adjust to the subtle color inflections of these seemingly unbroken sheets of color. At first imposing and uncompromising, these forthright rectangles of glowing color become more elusive as we look. Almost imperceptible color shifts, like musical *crescendi* and *diminuendi*, set up unexpected interior rhythms and enhance the paint-

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ings' multiple associations. Olitski's emphatic edge-drawing sharply defines these pulsing veils of color, creating tension between their seeming delicacy, their apparent lack of substance and their existence as self-contained color shapes. This contradiction is part of the pleasure they afford.

It's instructive to have seen the Olitskis soon after seeing the Cubist pictures of Picasso and Braque at MOMA. Nothing, it would seem, could be more different than Olitski's seamless expanses of lightstruck color and the Cubists' staccato arrangements of monochrome, transparent planes, but it turns out that the works have a great deal in common. Picasso and Braque's habit of piling planes most densely in the center of the canvas and allowing them to fray off at the edges asserts the independence of their paintings; the boundary between picture and what is not the picture is emphasized by the relative lack of incident at the edge of a Cubist still life, since this neutral zone serves to make us even more aware of the difference between the invented Cubist world and surrounding actuality. Olitski's edge-drawing serves the same purpose and attests to a similar attitude about the painting's autonomy. By restating the limits of his diaphanous veils of color, Olitski turns them into objects, so that they are removed from the realm of description – despite their associations with light, landscape and natural phenomena – and located, like any Cubist still life, firmly in the realm of invention.

Jack Bush's November show, at Grace Borgenicht Gallery, provided serendipitous counterpoint to the Noland and Olitski exhibits. In terms of his mature career, Bush, who died in 1977, was their contemporary (and friend). His eccentric, radiantly colored canvases explored similar territory. At Borgenicht, we could follow the evolution of his abstract pictures from calligraphic compositions that plainly responded to Abstract Expressionism, through the stacked color bars of the 1960s that first established his reputation, to his last floating clusters of deep toned strokes. For the first time that I am aware of, these abstract paintings were set in the context of the figurative landscapes and still lifes that Bush exhibited in his native Canada in the 1930s and 1940s. Since Bush entered Canadian art history as one of its first English-speaking abstract painters, this work received little attention until recently, but they are solid, personal little pictures that, despite their strong period feeling, withstand scrutiny. When seen with the later work, it is possible to see Bush distributing color in illogical ways in an otherwise conventional landscape, exactly as he would do thirty years later in an exuberant composition of stacked color blocks; it's possible, too, to discover a close family resemblance between the stylized tulips in a strange still life of the 1940s and the rounded, drifting color patches of a painting of the late sixties.

Bush is a splendid colorist and an inventor of compelling, energetic images. An explosive shape in a long horizontal painting of 1961, *Zing Green*,

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owes something to Gottlieb's Bursts, but the animation of the image and the picture's somber but brilliant color are Bush's own. Equally individual is a slightly earlier black and purple painting where a tattered patch of color drifts free of a centralized geometric "spine."

Bush lived in Toronto most of his life, but exhibited regularly in the United States. Among other things, he took first prize in a Carnegie International exhibition, and in the early seventies the Boston Museum of Fine Arts inaugurated its new department of contemporary art with a spectacular Bush exhibition. His mature paintings were, in fact, more avidly collected in the United States than in Canada for many years, but after his death, the absence of annual shows of new work made Bush far less visible in New York than in Toronto. It's good to see Bush once again taking his place among the artists with whom he felt most sympathy during his lifetime.

Stephen Greene's fall exhibition of paintings and drawings from the 1960s, at Marilyn Pearl Gallery, offered further evidence of the value of consistency and endurance. Greene has always been very much his own man, hard to classify. He is a superb draughtsman who can allude, in a single image, to the precision of mechanical drawing and the mystery of anatomical illustration, an eccentric colorist with a ravishing touch, a recorder of delirium worlds that flicker – improbably but convincingly – between geometry and biomorphism.

These days, Greene's pictures have a new context. The skulls and thigh bones, the crutches and ladders that have haunted his paintings since the 1950s not only prefigure images prevalent in the work of younger painters, but often sharply criticize the arbitrary way the younger generation makes use of them. Greene's references, for all their ambiguity, are unmistakably *his*; they stand for deep, private feelings, not for offhand appropriation.

Greene's range was evident in the sixties pictures exhibited, from meticulously delineated diagrams of other-worldly, threatening machines to brushy, painterly evocations of dense atmosphere, through which forms struggle to the surface. Just when you think you have deciphered one of Greene's suggestive dramas, it slips away from you. Events are often pushed to the edge of the canvas so that the most telling incident, the image that will make everything legible, seems to occur just beyond the confines of what we can see. It was good to confront Greene's earlier paintings and drawings again, proof of both the singlemindedness of his obsessions and the breadth of his conceptions.

Younger and less familiar artists were also well represented during the fall season, a good many of them women. It may simply be an indication that more women are making art at the end of the 1980s, but whatever the explanation, the phenomenon is worth noting. Sara Jane Roszak, at John Davis

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Gallery, showed sensitive, if slightly old-fashioned surrealizing drawings on plaster and shallow boxes filled with tiny, creepy things: teeth, fishhooks, artificial eyes. Nothing was particularly sinister in itself, but in combination and in context, everything took on a faintly surgical, disquieting air. (Roszak's sensibility is not far removed from Greene's, but like many of her generation, she relies more on the associative powers of actual objects than on invented images.)

The boxes were worth paying attention to, especially when they were farthest from Joseph Cornell, but the best piece in the show was a unique large-scale, wall-hung construction. Its size and loose-jointedness freed it from the preciousness that plagued smaller works, while the dialogue established by the found objects from which it was made was provocative. Memories of the studio and the laboratory brought the ramshackle grid to life; art and science, permanence and fragility, the nature of creation and transformation were all fleetingly called into question. The large relief demonstrated that Roszak can transform her scavenged elements, not merely display them.

Joyce Weinstein is not a new painter – she has a respectable exhibition history – but her razzle-dazzle, black and day-glo paintings at Alena Adlung Gallery, in October, made her look like a fresh, energetic talent. Weinstein is capable of marvelous, zany passages: scribbles, spots and scratches of color that melt into the ground and then pull loose. These explosive passages look spontaneous (whether they are or not), as though everything simply found its proper place without effort. I wish Weinstein would trust her ability to draw more than she does, instead of balancing her uninhibited flourishes with more predictable geometric figures; she convinces most when she appears to have calculated least. In her best pictures, she leaves things out, forcing her "backgrounds" of saturated darks to function not simply as foil but as space. But Weinstein refuses to play it safe. The same contrary spirit that makes her use fluorescent greens, hot pinks and danger-alert oranges (and get away with it) also makes her risk overloading a picture.

The strongest painting in the show was the modestly sized, asymmetrical *Yellow Thru Green on Black*, in which drawn elements were both restricted and beefed up to the point of functioning as zones of color rather than as superimposed marks, so the picture seemed more robust than usual. Weinstein's cast of characters was not substantially different – the effervescent discs and scribbles, the floating bars, like punctuation, were all present – but there was a new density and gravity to the picture that makes me curious about what will come next.

Nothing could be more unlike Weinstein's urban, street-smart paintings than Naomi Press's elegant constructions in stainless steel, shown at Dome Gallery. Press is clearly indebted to Anthony Caro and David Smith, but

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within the strict language of collage-derived construction, she has evolved her own idiom. Gleaming stainless becomes, in her hands, an extraordinarily refined metal whose burnished surface seems to have more to do with fine old silver and jewelry than with advanced technology and industry.

Press's smaller works were, generally, more successful than her larger pieces, possibly because they were denser. When Press builds blocky forms, by boxing-in volumes, she adds welcome contrast to the uniformity of her surfaces, her clean edges and thin planes. The clenched *Rond de Jambes* (curiously named for a ballet movement that demands an extended leg) was the best of the smaller works. It was clear, concise, intelligent, its energies turned inward. The play between sharp edges and swelling forms reinforced the contrast between crisp geometry and shiny material, while the density of the piece made it both self-contained and unignorable.

Petah Coyne's assemblages, shown at Jack Shainman Gallery, spring from a conception of sculpture wholly opposed to Press's. The heritage of Picasso, González, and Smith has everything to do with Press's work, nothing to do with Coyne's. Shamanism, craft, and the belief that objects gain meaning by virtue of having been chosen and displayed by the artist are at the heart of Coyne's work. She has been getting a good deal of attention lately – she was recently invited to do a major installation at the Brooklyn Museum, for example – and I suspect some of Coyne's popularity arises because her work allies itself with that of feminist heroines such as Eva Hesse and Louise Bourgeois. Surely Bourgeois's clusters of dangling, frankly erotic forms are the ancestors of Coyne's current hanging sculptures; like Bourgeois's work too, Coyne's sculpture alludes to the branching patterns of plants, to seed pods, to growth and accretion in general. But Coyne's large-scale constructions also have peculiarly modish connotations. They are like high-style, nonfunctional chandeliers as much as they are metaphors for the body or for nature.

Like many younger sculptors, Coyne knots, drapes and wraps, rather than constructs. Her pieces are rigged, tied, suspended, but there's something odd about them. What one might expect to be soft and light is usually, in this series, hard and brittle. Pouchy forms turn out to be made of metal. The matte black color, which contributes to the sculptures' stylish, designer look, is achieved with a kind of sand that changes its color through a chemical reaction. None of this, however, is apparent to the eye.

I imagine Coyne's method has importance for her, since there are easier ways to achieve the look of her recent work, but unfortunately, the process has little positive effect. The flat blackness of Coyne's suspended constructions flattens them; they become wholly graphic, like flimsy drawings hanging in the air, with little spatial presence.

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Richard Serra's exhibition at Pace Gallery and William Tucker's at David McKee were at opposite ends of the sculpture spectrum. Serra seeks to alter perceptions of space by the placement of relatively neutral and inert elements, while Tucker deals with massive, volumetric forms that insist on their otherness from their surroundings. But for all their differences, Serra and Tucker, collectively, stand for conceptions of what sculpture can be radically different from the notion of casual accumulation that underlies Coyne's work.

Serra installed a slender *T*-configuration in the middle part of Pace's second-floor space. The proportions of the piece suggested that some dialogue with the building's beams was intended, but the precise relationship of insertion to existing members was not readily apparent: was the off-setting of Serra's construction a deliberate wrenching of expectations or the result of a miscalculation? A wedge-shaped piece at the rear of the space was unexceptional, although it served as a reference point that made one aware of the length and narrowness of the gallery, just as the *T* served to measure its height.

But the installation in the front room was stunning. Two massive plates of steel, with all the subtle surface inflection one could wish for, were set at opposite ends, at unpredictable angles, filling the space between floor and ceiling. The shape of the room was changed from a rectangle to some sort of unnameable rhomboid. The plates retained the quality of menace that pervades most of Serra's work – you thought twice about getting too close to the ends of the room – but from a safe vantage point, their effect on the space was remarkable. The familiar, undistinguished room became mysterious, charged, poetic. For once, intention was borne out by result.

Tucker, who was first known, in this country, for his lucid, measured, linear constructions in steel and wood, has for the past several years investigated a conception of sculpture that has its modernist roots in the work of Rodin, about whom he has written penetratingly and perceptively. He deals with mass, inflected surfaces, containment – all those things that modernist construction consciously excluded from sculpture – without making work that is in any way historicist or reactionary. I find what Tucker is after compelling and take him very seriously indeed, but I still have doubts about what he has been doing lately. (The large exhibition of Tucker's work of the past decade at the Storm King Art Center, last year, simply reaffirmed for me how powerful his earlier constructed pieces are.)

Tucker's fall show was of relatively small sculptures, primal lumps of matter that gathered themselves together just enough to suggest, from certain views, buttocks, torsos, haunches, shoulders. The images seemed transitory, as though the form could revert to something completely neutral, at any

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moment. The scale was intimate, human, so that the worked, inflected surfaces suggested the flesh of bodies gone slack, at the same time that they provided a vivid record of process.

Tucker has said that he courts ambiguity. He doesn't want his sculptures to be too specific, capable of a single interpretation. In fact, the "torso" allusion in his recent work is a tenuous one, dependent only upon the associations provoked by a few relatively explicit passages: paired masses that suggest rather than describe buttocks, an indentation that reads as a navel, making its surrounding plausible as a trunk, and so on. These small incidents act as points of focus in what are otherwise pretty neutral forms. (I kept thinking about Rodin's remark about rolling a sculpture down a hill; when all the irrelevancies break off, you're left with the essential work.) Further "bodiness" is implied by the way Tucker's recent works rest on the horizontal plane. Unlike his earlier rearing horses' heads or the "Titans" of his last series, the new small sculptures definitely recline. As I have said, I tend to like what Tucker is pursuing more than what he has actually made. Thinking about his show at McKee, after the fact, I find I am liking them better than I did when I was face to face with them. It's puzzling.

Out of town, two strong shows by – once again – women served as further assurance that making art isn't a question of producing hit singles. Sheila Girling, a British painter known in New York from her exhibitions at Acquavella Galleries' now defunct contemporary department, showed recent collaged paintings at Francis Graham-Dixon Gallery, a new and lively addition to the London art scene. Girling, an accomplished landscape painter, previously made lyrical abstractions notable for their transparent floods of cool, opalescent color and their evocation of landscape and nature. Their pearly, greyed tones and soft transitions seemed a logical equivalent for moist English light.

Recent extended sojourns in Spain and North Africa, along with annual summer stays in upstate New York, have altered Girling's sense of color. Her newer work, probably her strongest and clearest to date, depends upon more saturated and intense hues than I've seen her use in the past. It also seems less related to landscape, although light is still a key element, and there's a suggestion that we are seeing through a window or a gate, a notion that stabilizes even the most free-wheeling of Girling's compositions.Her use of collage seems critical to the success of these paintings. By cutting shapes from painted canvas, Girling equips herself with a lexicon of clearly bounded "images" that she can distribute with great freedom, eclipsing passages already painted on her "ground" or, conversely, establishing new events on untouched canvas. Often, she paints on top of superimposed collaged shapes, knitting them into their surroundings. The surfaces of these pictures can be

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very complex, as can their spatial implications, but the generous scale of the collaged elements and, I suspect, Girling's fundamental clearheadedness, seems to insure that complexity doesn't become confusion.

Sandi Slone, also an alumna of Acquavella's contemporary department, showed opulent recent work at Levinson/Kane Gallery in Boston. Slone, who has always been an eccentric, original colorist, has been exploring a range of metallic, jewel-like paints, with startling results. Her pictures glow: bursts of gold and copper are barely contained by surrounding pools of black-brown, and even chromatic colors, such as reds, blues, and violets, seem burnished, lit from within. Yet we're always aware of Slone's surfaces as being paint and aware, too, of the hand that moved the paint across the canvas.

A group of intense, direct paper works, among the best pieces in the show, seem to have provided the impetus for many of the canvases. Slone deposits paint in broad strokes that, curiously, seem to take on individual personalities. Often, she repeats them until they fill the entire picture, pressing aggressively forward. Slone's earlier paintings, in which she lined up elongated forms that evoked vessels, torsos, and, sometimes, phalluses,with the same scale shifts and ambiguities as William Tucker's sculptures, help us "read" her current images as serried figures, despite the essential abstractness of the paintings. And at the same time, the insistently repeated strokes suggest, among other things, scales, feathers, and the multiple breasts of Artemis of Ephesus. Other pictures, such as the broadly handled, relaxed *Grand Inquisitor*, play loose, calligraphic drawing against the metallic color, legible at once as vague reference, message and simple mark-making.

A few years ago, Slone painted a series of "portraits" of Chinese bronze vessels, revelling in their elaborate patterns and patinas. The crusted, granular surfaces of her newer work distill the associations of the vessels pictures, and are all the better, I think, for being less specific. The allusions seem broader, less expected. One doesn't need to know, for example, that Slone spent a good deal of last summer working a small Catalan town or that she made an extended visit to Spain in 1987 to get a hit of "Spanishness" – in addition to the more familiar sense of patination, the passage of time – from her metallic, gritty pictures.

There's something slightly perverse about Slone's new pictures. She seems to strive for extraordinary luxuriousness and then, quite deliberately do something that will subvert what she has achieved – brutal strokes, consciously "dumb" drawing. Slone appears to be testing just how far she can go before she succumbs to pure sensuousness and, possibly, pure vulgarity. It gives her paintings an edge and keeps our attention.

One of the great pleasures of the fall season was Mary Lucier's video

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installation, *Wilderness*, at Greenberg-Wilson in October and November. Like Lucier's earlier piece, *Ohio at Giverny*, one of the few memorable works in an otherwise fairly dismal Whitney Biennial some years back, *Wilderness* is a delicate, provocative meditation on the boundaries between art, artifice and nature, on our changing relationship to our natural surroundings. Literary and art historical references abound, miraculously without pretentiousness or dogma. Lucier is good at making her points with apparent throw-away images whose full richness and complexity become clearer with subsequent viewings. Images of the Northeast, from Long Island up the Hudson Valley to Newfoundland, both natural and man-made, idyllic, ironic or disturbing, are projected in a formal, but unpredictable sequence on seven monitors. Occasionally, like chapter headings or summings up, key images are stilled and distanced by a neutral border that surrounds and reduces them; at intervals, an imposed gold frame adds another layer of distance and turns these surrounded images into approximations of Luminist and Hudson River School landscapes, sublime views where, at least in one sequence, waves still lap.

A last sequence of icebergs, a reaffirmation perhaps of the potency of nature despite twentieth-century man's exploitativeness and indifference, is sheer poetry. The viewer feels he or she is in a small, rocking boat; the flux of the alternating images evokes the movement of waves, the motion of the ice mountains on the sea. Lucier plays tricks with scale, making us unsure, at first, of what we are looking at. Gradually, we are convinced of the monumentality of the bergs. In one fleeting, magical sequence, the seven images all shift slowly to the right, as though the icebergs were drifting out of sight, at slightly different rates. Frederick Church is in there somewhere, and so is Herman Melville, I think, but translated into late eighties terms. As with Lucier's other allusions to nineteenth-century American painting, from the *trompe-l'oeil* still lifes of Harnett and Peto, to the dramatic landscapes of Cole and Durand, and the intimate, stop-time images of Inness and Fitzhugh Lane, the reference is precise but neither labored nor obvious. The sound track, composed by Earl Howard, is equally evocative and subtle.

I'm not sure what I think about the elaborate, referential bases on which the monitors sit, but I've no doubts at all about the piece. Lucier's work is neither about fashion, literature, sociology nor self-advertisement. Like all visual art worth taking seriously, it simply addresses all of one's intellectual and emotional baggage – through the eye.

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Jed Perl

SALVADOR DALI

For a few years during the 1970s I had a part-time job with a couple who ran art auctions as fund-raisers for Jewish charities. It was a Mom-and-Pop operation; we worked in their upper East Side apartment, or else in a small warehouse downtown, which they rented from a relative for some nominal fee. The stock ranged from oil paintings that were mass-produced by means of stencils in sweatshops in the Far East (we bought them from a wholesaler in Queens) to signed limited-edition lithographs by Calder, Dali, and Miró.

Anyone who bought a work for over a hundred dollars could write to us in New York for what we called a letter of authentication. One of my jobs was to reply to these requests. Mostly I wrote a single line, explaining that such and such was an "original lithograph" – or just a "lithograph," if the plate from which it had been printed hadn't been produced by the artist. Dali prints – which were among our biggest sellers – presented particular problems for me as I sat bent over the old Olivetti portable. Recently, as I read the chapter, "Avida Dollars" in Meryle Secrest's biography, *Salvador Dali*, I was reminded of the honest but evasive letters of authentication that I used to compose. "The sizes of Dali's print editions," Secrest observed, "are nowadays their most desirable aspect. What publishers like to tell their prospective buyers is that they are limited – to 350 or 500 or 1,000 – but what they frequently fail to add is that each country has its own edition of that size. Thus the German edition will have an A after it, the Italian edition an I, the French an F, the Japanese a J – with such a system in operation a supposedly limited edition can run into tens of thousands." This is something I realized when one of our customers wrote in to inquire about the significance of the initial after the limitation number on a Dali print he'd just purchased. I went to the files and found a brochure from the publisher that explained it all very clearly. Then I had to figure out a way to break the news to our high bidder, gently.

Towards the end of the seventies the oversized signatures on those Dali prints were looking stranger and stranger. Unpacking them, we'd shake

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our heads and give each other incredulous looks. Was Dali's legendary signature just becoming sloppier as he signed hundreds of sheets of blank paper a day? (Now he was putting his John Hancock on the paper as he cut the deal, often long before the prints were produced.) Or were the prints actually being signed by someone other than Dali? We didn't know; and nobody will ever know for sure. Yet the people who came to our auctions loved the Dalis – those prints were Joe America's idea of Art.

Dali, who died a year ago at the age of eighty-four, hasn't left behind any glow. Reading about his life is a disagreeable experience, because even the early years in Catalonia – in the city of Figueres, where he was born, and the fishing village of Cadaques, where the family spent summers – have become gobbed up by Dali's own mythomania. Dali was named after an older brother who died short of his second birthday, and so a morbid sense of twinship haunted the artist's childhood. There are these genuinely engaging aspects to Dali's life: He passed across a series of magnificent backdrops – early twentieth-century Barcelona, which had already nurtured Gaudi, Picasso, and Miró (Miró's first dealer, Josep Dalmau, was Dali's, too), and Paris in the later days of Surrealism. But when we're asked to see everything in Dali-vision, blurred, fractured, distorted and at the same time harshly overlit, it's hard to maintain much interest.

I particularly admire one of Dali's earliest paintings – a very plain still life of some slices of bread in a basket, dated 1926. It's tight, dry, and severe; it has a desert-climate clarity that we feel in early Miró, and that echoes the Spanish art of the seventeenth century – Zurburan, Sanchez Cotan, and the early Velázquez. The obviously gifted artist who painted this singular vision and arrived in Paris at the end of the twenties is recalled in André Thirion's charmingly levelheaded memoir, *Revolutionaries without Revolution*. "He wore a fine mustache, like the film actor Adolphe Menjou. Slender, shy, phlegmatic, well-mannered, he had an inexhaustible gift of gab, which his natural humor and his Spanish accent sprinkled with comical effects. But he knew when to hold his peace, and he would hold it for a long time, curled up, attentive and serious, in an easy chair. Enormously intelligent, he was obviously capable of wrecking any mental construct whatsoever simply because he was so marvelously funny; he could make everyone but himself howl with laughter."

Let's remember Dali in 1929, at the point where avant-gardism is merging with high fashion, and Surrealism, so far as the fashionable world is concerned, is beginning to resemble Neoromanticism. Within Surrealism itself, Phase Two has begun, announced in Breton's *Second Surrealist Manifesto* of December 1929. André Masson and Joan Miró, the two greatest painters within the movement, are moving out of the orbit of Breton. Miró simply

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drifts away, while Masson announces that he's now a "dissident" Surrealist. Automatism – the unfettered linear arabesque that in the hands of Masson and Miró was Surrealism's radical contribution to pictorial art – isn't mentioned in the *Second Manifesto*. Breton, who around the same time writes an introduction to the catalogue of Dali's first show in Paris, is turning his attention toward a different sort of painting.

While the weirdly accessorized dream worlds of the early Dalis could have been hatched only in the wake of Freud, the artist's technique was premodern and even antimodern – a throwback to the late nineteenth century academicians who had imitated the smooth tonal transitions of photography. (Dali was a great admirer of that arch-academic, Meissonier.) The transformation of natural forms into the not-quite natural or the something-other-than-natural had been an element in art since Cubism; but no matter how outlandish the imagery became in the work of De Chirico and Picasso, their experimental brushwork and lively surfaces were an extension of the improvisatory styles of the Impressionists and Postimpressionists. Dali rejected the developing conventions of modern painting by rendering forms sculpturally and setting them into a very deep space. As much as the strange dream-visions, it was the old-fashioned spatial constructions that gave his early work its air of provocation. Dali's slicked-up surface carried a De Chirico-Picasso baggage of dreams into fantasies of unprecedented theatricality. Working on a tiny scale at the end of the twenties, Dali was making Surrealist Fabergés – toys to gawk at. Parisian culture could no longer support an aesthetic of formal purity; but it remained for Dali to demonstrate exactly how megalomaniacally baroque impurity could become.

The small-sized Dalis of the end of the twenties left André Breton "wonderstruck" (Thieron's word): but at the same time, as Thieron explains, their "virtuosity worried Breton." "We wondered," he goes on, "whether larger formats wouldn't make Dali's paintings look like photographic blow-ups. The year 1931 proved us wrong." I would disagree. I believe they were proven right. Some have claimed to see a Flemish accuracy in Dali's painting of the 1930s and 1940s; but he has none of the clarity of form or of color that gives even the most horrific dreams of Bosch and Breughel their lyric beauty. Dali's renderings are grimly literal (in the manner of the nineteenth-century *pompiers*) or woozily fantastical (in the manner of Gustave Moreau). Actually, I'd take the best of a nineteenth-century academic like Meissonier over most any Dali. Some of those Meissoniers give a minor pleasure – the pleasure of a dull, consistent virtuosity. Dali isn't a virtuoso. His drawing is lumpish. His color is metallic – like tarnished brass. He presents muddle-headed dreams in a muddle-headed way.

When Breton changed his mind about Dali in the late thirties he ex-

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plained his rejection of the by then notorious Spaniard in terms of the artist's Fascist sympathies and lust for money. This is a case in which high living does go along with bad art – so Breton, who concocted that dazzling anagram, "Avida Dollars," could feel justified in the thought that great art is produced by sober people. As it happens, during the thirties and forties, some of Dali's best inventions were among his most unabashedly commercial – the collaborations with the fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, the decorations for the pages of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. When Dali turned a shoe into a hat or splattered his signature motifs over the glossy magazines, he was showing the world that the only fantasy life worth living was the fantasy life of commerce. And some of those conceits – like the lobster-ornamented organza evening dress he designed with Schiaparelli – are suffused with the hyperbolic mood of Europe on the brink of World War II. Fashion was the perfect vehicle for an artist who never had a very firm grasp on the fantasy life of art itself. Dali's escapades in *haute couture* are among the least fussy, most authentically engaging things he ever did.

Dividing his time among New York, Paris, and Spain, Dali careened through the postwar decades, an ever more absurd character. In the biography, there comes a point where you start skipping pages – it's all such nonsense. When an artist somehow shows us that he really loves art – well, then there's an awful lot of nonsense we'll accept. De Chirico had a grasp of painting, and so even his kitsch attracts us, draws us in. And even Picasso's worst antics – the clown impersonations recorded in David Douglas Duncan's book, *Private World of Pablo Picasso* – are of some interest, because we know there's a real person somewhere in there (we know it because we know that only real people make real art). Dali's craziness is another matter; it doesn't resonate. The oversized work of his later years is pallid. Dali cranks up his surrealist machinery, but there's no element of risk. Those Hollywood-scale religious extravaganzas remain locked up in Dali's mind – mental constructs with no pictorial life to them. And the life, the life: how can we get caught up in the flamboyant clothes, the dinners at Trader Vics in New York with the hippy hangers-on, when there's nobody at the heart of the carnival? And all the speculation about life with Gala – did she really control him? Was she a manipulative monster? – is just star gossip.

For the public that bought his prints, Dali became an adorable monster. Whatever might have been threatening about his eccentricities was defused by the publicity mills. Dali is the Liberace of modern art. His personality was so theatrically overdetermined that it began to look tame – as tamely domesticated as the pet ocelot, defanged and declawed, that he led around on a leash. Though Dali wasn't the only artist who wanted to market his work among the American middle class – prints by Picasso, Matisse, Braque,

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Léger, Chagall, and Miró poured off the presses of Paris after World War II – no one played the commercial angle so furiously as Dali. And the paying public loved him for playing to its tastes. By and large, the great modern artists were unwilling, beyond a certain point, to put one over on the public or pander to the public. They insisted that the plates from which their prints were made were produced by hand – by their own hands. They insisted on some degree of quality control – on some degree of craft. As for Dali, there's really nothing original about most of his prints. They're basically photomechanical reproductions, not different from the reproductions in a glossy magazine. But the public loves that photomechanical gloss. Dali, it seems, respected the public just enough to give it what it could immediately understand. To the public that sees only crudity in the craft of modern art, Dali's prints look like the most craftsmanlike of all modern achievements.

Dali's gift for fashion and commerce and self-promotion can be seen as foreshadowing the commerce-conscious art world of today. For those who believe that Andy Warhol is the end, Dali might be the beginning of the end. But there's another way to look at this. Phonies have always flourished in close proximity to the real artists. Maybe our situation always remains essentially the same, which may not be cause for celebration, but will at least quiet those who would see the apocalypse around every corner.

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Books

FOUR POLISH POETS

TO URANIA: SELECTED POEMS. By Joseph Brodsky. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $14.95.
AN AGE AGO: A SELECTION OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIAN POETRY. Translated by Alan Myers with a Foreword by Joseph Brodsky. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $19.95.

Stockholm's limelight has dimmed, and now Joseph Brodsky faces the usual tribulation of a recently-crowned Nobel laureate: the critical reception of his first new book published after the Prize. Besides death and taxes, the third most certain thing in life is the ritual Nobelist-bashing. You can bet your life's savings that more than one critic will approach Brodsky's newest book with a single intent in mind: to prove by its example that something's wrong with the Nobel Prize. Others, who might have sympathized with the poet's striving for greatness before, will now look upon him with the kind of automatic suspicion that rises in us whenever someone's greatness has been officially certified. Still, being bashed may be less upsetting than being smothered with mass-media praise, all those endlessly repeated clichès about a Russian boy who made good in America – stereotypes heaped upon stereotypes and derived for the most part not from studying Brodsky's work but from reading other newspapers' stories about him. I am sure that Brodsky himself will take all this in stride, but it would not hurt if at least some critics approached his new books without the anti-Nobel or pro-Nobel bias and appreciated the fact that, apart from all the laurels and dinners with the Swedish king, he is that rare gift: a poet who tells us important things in a way only he can.

Brodsky's originality stems in large part from his art of exploiting the unique background of crisscrossing traditions that lie behind him. A poet who now belongs to both Russian and American literatures and who, in his Leningrad years, grew up on a mixed diet of the Russian nineteenth- and twentieth-century classics, the English tradition from Donne to Auden, and modern Polish poetry, could not help but make generative comparisons, choices, and combinations throughout his career. A prominent thread in this fabric of traditions – one about which Brodsky has not written explicitly very

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much thus far – is now brought to light in *An Age Ago*, a slim anthology of nineteenth-century Russian poetry from Zhukovsky and Batyushkov to Tyutchev and Fet, translated by Alan Myers but provided by Brodsky with an illuminating foreword and equally enlightening biographical notes. Myers' elegant and technically dexterous translations (he is at his best in what seems to be the least translatable, that is, in compact and semantically dense lyrical miniatures such as Vyazemsky's "Tears" or Fet's "Butterfly") make the anthology a highly enjoyable little album of lyrics, many of which are as arresting as they are charmingly old-fashioned. (The only exceptions are, not surprisingly, the three poems by Nekrasov whose pounding rhythms combined with heavy-handed didacticism do not fare at all well in the English version.)

At the same time, however, a Brodsky fan may profit from reading this book as one more of the poet's indirect comments on the nature of his own work. In trying to explain what makes the nineteenth century interesting for the twentieth-century man, Brodsky offers a couple of thought-provoking clues. His view on the relationship between the two epochs is paradoxical. On the one hand, the nineteenth-century culture appears to the modern man as a sort of "grammatical *déjà vu*"; it already contains "nearly every insight or concept which our century claims as its own achievement." On the other, a world of spiritual difference seems to separate our times from the nineteenth century, "perhaps the last period in the history of our species when its scale of reality was quantitatively human," and when "much less stood between man and his thoughts about himself than today."

Accordingly, in what he writes about specific authors in his biographical notes (each expanding into a mini-essay pregnant with salient observations on everything from a poet's position in society to his style), Brodsky is equally interested in what is historically dead and gone and what is aesthetically or philosophically still alive and kicking. The former is, roughly speaking, the traditional version of Romanticism conceived as a clash between lofty ideals and disappointing reality, and leading inevitably towards the shallow sentimentalism of self-pity characteristic of "a cultural tradition whose main tenor is consolation." The latter is the best Russian poets' "incessant quest . . . for the unique through the thick of the ordinary," which results in intellectual tension and dramatic conflict – in, for instance, Vyazemsky's poems that "describe, inform, argue, suggest rather than sing," Pushkin's "disquieting . . . ability to combine a light touch with breathtaking profundity," Baratynsky's "analytical" lyricism, or Lermontov's "thoroughly corrosive, bilious self-knowledge."

In fact, all these qualities taken together might well serve as components of a critical portrayal of Brodsky himself. Searching for his genealogical

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roots in the nineteenth century, he makes, for a Russian poet, very fastidious choices: he rejects the overwhelming Russian tradition of sentimental "consolation" clothed in conventional imagery and songlike mellifluousness, and instead prefers anything that has to do with the restless intellectual's metaphysical, cognitive, and ethical dramas. In his own poetry, this preference is reflected mainly in the semantic ambiguity and tension that result from the constant clash between the spontaneity of colloquial speech and the discipline of highly complex and conspicuous formal restraints. In that sense, Brodsky owes a great deal to nineteenth-century poetry, but only to its specific and, in Russia, rather atypical undercurrent. He is indebted a great deal more to the much earlier school of seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry, which never made its mark in his native literature and which he appropriated on Russia's behalf from the English tradition. Ironically, his own strikingly modern lyricism, compared to which all the Yevtushenkos and Voznesenskys seem not to have gone very far away from Nekrasov, could not have been born if not for the twentieth-century experience, but it also owes its existence to the seventeenth-century art of conceit, "felt thought," paradoxical contrast, and dialogic imagination. Thus, his work appears a high-wire act of balancing between two seemingly incompatible tasks: it singlehandedly propels Russian poetry into the late twentieth century while also substituting for an entire bloc of tradition absent in the Russian cultural past. A T. S. Eliot or perhaps W. H. Auden of Eastern Europe, Brodsky is also the John Donne Russian poetry never had.

This obvious truth is repeatedly confirmed by the poems included in *To Urania*, Brodsky's fourth collection in English but only the second in which he is responsible for both selection and most of the translations. Just as the earlier *A Part of Speech*, the present selection is representative of the entire course of Brodsky's career, from works written in Russia in the 1960s to new poems composed on Western soil and (with the exception of those written originally in English) collected in his most recent Russian volume, *Urania*. This broad chronological and geographic frame contains a rich variety of genres, modes, and approaches – from a mock funeral elegy ("To a Friend: in Memoriam") and love lyrics ("Polonaise: A Variation," "Seven Strophes") to political philippics ("The Berlin Wall Tune," "Lines on the Winter Campaign"), a fantastic parable with satirical overtones ("The New Jules Verne"), and a metaphysical treatise ("The Fly") – but also an amazingly consistent vision and style. The formal key to the implicit philosophy of Brodsky's poetry seems to be the ever-present tension between the spontaneous, fluid, utterly conversational syntax and nonrestrictive vocabulary on the one hand, and, on the other, the highly regular and complicated patterns of rhyme, meter, and stanza, whose level of technical difficulty reaches the

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point of ostentatious exaggeration and makes them a sort of deliberate semantic statement in their own right. "Gorbunov and Gorchakov," for instance, a forty-page poem in thirteen cantos written in 1968, is based almost entirely on colloquial dialogue: it includes lengthy conversations between two patients in a Soviet psychiatric prison (one of them apparently squealing on another) as well as between each of them separately and the interrogating doctors; the topics range from the taste of cabbage served for supper to Russia's destiny and the meaning of life. Yet all this raw stuff of spontaneous speech and chaotic reality is squeezed into the rigorous cubes of ten-line stanzas based on two alternating sets of quintuple rhymes. Similarly, "The Fifth Anniversary," a poem which looks back at the Soviet reality from the perspective of five years of exile, employs a couple of dozen regular sets of triple rhymes; as if this were not enough, the rhymes are paroxytonic and selected with an eye to their pun-like quality ("terror / there or / error," and so on). In virtually every poem in this collection, the art of juggling rhymes and other formal constraints verges on the impossible and thus attracts the reader's attention, as if the poet wanted him not to overlook the fact that his devices serve as a means to tame and overcome reality's threatening pressure rather than merely describe it.

This is exactly Brodsky's point, and this also explains his stubbornness in translating his own poetry with such an emphasis on strict subservience to the demands of the original rhymes, meters, or stanzaic patterns. In his case, these supposedly external, detachable props are an intrinsic and irremovable part of the poetic statement as a whole. For the statement he keeps making is precisely about poetry's power to question the natural order of the universe. In his poetry, rhyme opposes time; more exactly, both space and time, both Urania and Klio, both cosmology and history. A poem's inevitably individualistic focus is a challenge to the anonymous tyranny of general laws governing the intergalactic void as well as biological processes of the flesh and institutions of society; the mutual cohesion and heightened semantic potential instilled by the poet into the words of the ordinary language is an attempt to overcome the destructive forces of isolation and inertia lurking in the world's spatial magnitude and temporal transitoriness. As befits a truly profound metaphysical poetry, Brodsky's work is both a testimony and a prayer. It roams various realms and dimensions of reality, never losing touch with the human experience and being always aware of the potential of evil and error inherent in it. Yet, for all the thematic variety of its earthly concerns, Brodsky's poetry is also an uninterrupted dialogue with the Maker – the actual addressee of both the poet's diatribe against the world's injustice and his praise of the world's very existence:

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What should I say about life? That it's long and abhors transparence.
Broken eggs make me grieve; the omelette, though, makes me vomit.
Yet until brown clay has been crammed down my larynx,
only gratitude will be gushing from it.

STANISLAW BARANCZAK

HAPPY AS A DOG'S TAIL. By Anna Swir. Translated by Czeslaw Milosz with Leonard Nathan. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. $15.95.
TREMOR: SELECTED POEMS. By Adam Zagajewski. Translated by Renata Gorczynski. With a preface by Czeslaw Milosz. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $12.95.
UNATTAINABLE EARTH. By Czeslaw Milosz. Translated by the author and Robert Hass. The Ecco Press. $17.95.

Contemporary Polish literature is known in America for its absurdist as well as its highly intellectual currents. Available translations reveal an obsession with the grotesque ironies of history that Polish letters share with the other Central European literatures. But there is also a sensual and erotic side to Polish literature that can be seen in the poetry of Anna Swir, Adam Zagajewski, and Czeslaw Milosz.

Of the three poets, only Czeslaw Milosz is well known to American readers. Milosz's translation of *Happy as a Dog's Tail* introduces Anna Swir as a feminist poet. Zagajewski's *Tremor*, splendidly translated by Renata Gorczynski, also appears under Milosz's patronage. I suspect that Milosz was attracted to these very different poets because their poetry echoes two important aspects of Milosz's own writing that he continues to explore in his latest work.

Unattainable Earth is not a book of poems. Rather, it is a carefully assembled collection of poems, prose fragments, quotations from major European writers that has the appearance of a writer's notebook. It also includes three poems by D.H. Lawrence and twelve by Walt Whitman, whose ecstatic proclamation that "every hour of the light and dark is a miracle" resonates in Milosz's poems of affirmation. *Unattainable Earth* records Milosz's thoughts during the four years after he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. The eternal questions, eternally unanswerable, which Milosz wrestled with in his earlier writings are raised once more, as the poet struggles to understand the mysteries enfolded in his personal destiny. *Unattainable Earth*

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opens with a cycle of five short poems on Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, in which the poet simultaneously recreates the painting's imagery and meditates on its meaning. The last poem in this cycle explores several persistent themes in Milosz's poetry: the irresistible, inexplicable attraction of sensual pleasures; the persistence in memory of the past (his native Lithuania); the ever-present awareness of death that heightens the sensuousness of recollection:

> They are incomprehensible, the things of this earth.
> The lure of waters. The lure of fruits.
> Lure of the two breasts and long hair of a maiden.
> In rouge, in vermillion, in that color of ponds
> Found only in the Green Lakes near Wilno.
> . . . .
> So that for a short moment there is no death
> And time does not unreel like a skein of yarn
> Thrown into an abyss.
>
> ("Earth Again")

Milosz's reference to the Green Lakes near Wilno is an example of one of his most persistent themes. The past is doubly inaccessible because of the inexorable forward march of time and the violent intervention of history. By focusing on sensory perceptions of costumes, mannerisms, the natural setting, Milosz vies with time's power to obscure the past. Like Milosz, Adam Zagajewski also explores themes of memory and exile. A member of the postwar generation, Zagajewski was born in 1945 in Lvov (newly incorporated into the Soviet Union), and was repatriated to Poland as a child. He emigrated to Paris in 1981, after the crushing of Solidarity. Zagajewski is preoccupied with the poignant yearning of the exile to recapture his past. He uses the condition of exile as a vehicle for exploring the mysteries of existence. He revels in words, savoring them as surrogates for the places and experiences to which he can never return. His poems are richly textured, woven from images that arise out of and merge into one another in a verbal approximation of the unencumbered flow of time:

> . . . there was too much of Lvov, and now there isn't any, it grew
> relentlessly
> . . . .
> But scissors cut it, along the lines and through
> the fiber, tailors, gardeners, censors
> cut the body and the wreaths, pruning shears worked
> diligently, as in a child's cutout

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along the dotted line of a roe deer or a swan.
Scissors, penknives, and razor blades scratched,
cut, shortened the voluptuous dresses
of prelates, of squares and houses, and trees
fell soundlessly, as in a jungle,
and the cathedral trembled . . .
.. . . . why must every city
become Jerusalem and every man a Jew,
and now in a hurry just
pack, always, each day,
and go breathless, go to Lvov, after all
it exists, quiet and pure as
a peach. Lvov is everywhere.

("To Go To Lvov")

Zagajewski's poems speak of the pain of being subjected to the hostile forces of history, of the weariness induced by the realization that there is no such thing as progress, no escape "from the trap which in every generation was set / by Danton and Robespierre, Beria and the other / ambitious disciples" ("In the Past"). But he discovers consolation in the minute aesthetic pleasures that are also a part of our world:

dawn and the milkman get up early
and run through snow, leaving white traces,
soon filled with water. A small bird
drinks that water and it sings and once more
it saves the disorder of things and you and me
and the singing.

("In the Past")

This Zen-like emphasis on the beauty of the moment is further evidence of Zagajewski's spiritual affinity with Milosz. Zagajewski speaks of the consolation provided by "the beauty created by others." Milosz, at his most optimistic, finds in beauty the one hope for mankind's salvation:

And when people cease to believe that there
is good and evil
Only beauty will call to them and save them
So that they still know how to say: this is
true and that is false.

("One More Day")

Several poems in *Unattainable Earth* attempt to recreate the beauty of

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a particular moment. Often, Milosz's theme of the moment of heightened sensory receptivity is linked with another of his persistent themes – the fear that poetry is unequal to the task of expressing human experience:

> . . . And I, always insatiable, just as in this
> moment when I come to the window, see a tower with a
> clock, snow underneath it on the lawns of the Ann
> Arbor campus, a girl walking on a pathway, and the
> very act of being here, by the window, in this moment
> similar to any other, i.e., unrepeatable, with the
> whiteness of the snow and the movement of legs
> observed from above, is sufficient to initiate my
> lament on the insufficiency of language.
>
> (untitled)

Despite this fear, Milosz has an image of what poetry might be like in the future:

> . . . I know it is attainable because I experienced brief moments when it almost created itself under my pen, only to disappear immediately. The rhythm of the body will be in it, heartbeat, pulse, sweating, menstrual flow, the gluiness of sperm, the squatting position at urinating, the movements of the intestines, together with the sublime needs of the spirit, and our duality will find its form in it, without renouncing one zone or the other.

Milosz may have found an approximation of that poetry of the future in Anna Swir's work. Swir was a woman of Milosz's own generation, but he was apparently unaware of her poetry until he returned to Poland for his triumphal post-Nobel visit in 1981. Swir is a feminist poet, a singer of female sexuality, of the body as mediator of all experience. It is extraordinary that she found her strong feminist voice quite late in her life. Until the publication in 1970 (at age sixty) of the first of the four books of poetry from which Milosz selected the poems of *Happy as a Dog's Tail*, she was known primarily as a writer of works for young readers. (Swir died in 1984.) A woman is always the center of Swir's universe; other people who appear in her world – lovers, husbands, children, elderly women – are extension of her body or projections of her fate. Swir is Everywoman, celebrating her own sexuality, her physical vitality, her ability to conceive and nurture a child, her combative ties with men, and also her body's inevitable decay. She observes her body as if it leads a separate existence, noting its sensations of ecstasy, or

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pain, or languor. She stands aloof from its sexual entanglements, coolly observing the relation between herself and her body, her body and her (its) lovers.

Swir alternates between an ecstatic acceptance of physicality and utter disgust at the inevitable triumph of matter over spirit. For her, all knowledge begins in the body:

> O, many riches,
> many precious truths
> growing immense in a metaphysical echo,
> many initiations,
> delicate and startling
> I owe to you, my thigh.
>
> ("A Woman Talks to Her Thigh")

She has no need to idealize the body; she wants it to be seen as it is. She can be whimsical, as in the poem "I Sleep and I Snore," in which "the complete happiness" is declared to be a body suffused with snoring. Or she can be grim:

> I will become kidney failure
> or the gangrene of the large intestine.
> And I will expire in shame.
> And the universe will expire with me,
> reduced as it is
> to a kidney failure
> and the gangrene of the large intestine.
>
> ("Large Intestine")

But she is always clear-eyed, always candid. Whether she is musing about the powerful emotions of maternal love, clinically anticipating an end to a love affair, or crowing about the physical exhilaration of running, Swir's poems are always a fierce affirmation of self that imply intense gratitude for the gift of life.

That self-affirmation and its accompanying affirmation of the fullness of life are also characteristic of Milosz. The many philosophical reflections in *Unattainable Earth* inquire into the existence of good and evil, the concept of original sin, the possibility that not God but a diabolic power created this world. But the Manichaean streak that has always been present in Milosz coexists with a hunger for experience, what he calls his "immense amazement." He can express this in richly detailed sumptuous poems – the ones that Zagajewski seems closest to – or straightforwardly, with a touch of

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whimsy, like the best of Swir, as in his poem, "Myness":

"My parents, my husband, my brother, my sister."
I am listening in a cafeteria at breakfast.
The women's voices rustle, fulfill themselves
In a ritual no doubt necessary.
I glance sidelong at their moving lips
And I delight in being here on earth
For one more moment, with them, here on earth,
To celebrate our tiny, tiny my-ness.

MADELINE G. LEVINE

EMPSON'S RAGBAG

ARGUFYING: ESSAYS IN LITERATURE AND CULTURE. By William Empson, edited by John Haffenden. U. of Iowa Press. $19.95.

In premature retrospect, William Empson looks like the only literary critic of genius in the English-speaking world in this century, and he was working on three books when he died in 1984 – *Using Biography*, which instantly appeared; *Essays on Shakespeare* (1986); and a book of Renaissance essays.

He also left a vast pile of reviews and other articles dating back to the 1920s – he was born in 1906 – which he used to refer to cheerfully as his ragbag. *Argufying* is that ragbag. It consists of 119 prose pieces starting with an undergraduate review of 1928, some of them unpublished and almost all uncollected, mainly on "botherheaded" theoretical critics, as he called them, as well as a handful of Renaissance and seventeenth-century authors, and then – his relative indifference to the eighteenth century being highly characteristic of a Cambridge nurture in the 1920s – W.B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, some twentieth-century novelists and a famous witty-malicious piece on George Orwell, who was his wartime colleague in BBC propaganda.

This is an enormous arena of debate, and the book is so rich in points that it will take years for the critical world to digest it, if it ever does. John Haffenden has done us a large service. He was a young colleague at Sheffield University, in Empson's native Yorkshire, and he has used the

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Empson papers now at Harvard in a 55-page introduction that is impressively ample and almost excessively documented, cutting a wide swathe through acres of modern critical theory, especially theories of literary intention, and putting it all in. He has also given the book a good index, which is crucial. This is a book to argue with and refer to down the years.

A single review, then, can only summarize first impressions. One I have already ventured: that genius, and no mere talent, was at work when Empson drove the critical pen, the word fitting him as it fits only two or three others in the language, notably Samuel Johnson and S. T. Coleridge. A talent, somebody once remarked, hits a target: a genius hits something you did not even know was there. When Empson writes on *Paradise Lost*, "The Ancient Mariner" or *Ulysses*, he raises questions you had not even noticed. That elevates his criticism into a different order of magnitude from anything Eliot, Richards, Leavis and the American New Critics were at. Empson refuses to play the game they played. Much of the time he refuses to play any familiar game. He stands alone.

A second impression is that he is the only critic of the century, at least in English, to have a world-view peculiar to himself. Variously influenced, from time to time, by Marx and Freud, I. A. Richards and T. S. Eliot, and many others, he was never convincingly a disciple, at least for long, and his ideology is his own. Like most ideologies of the past century and more, it was primarily a theory of history. *Argufying* is not the best place to study it – *Milton's God* (1961) remains that – but it emerges here in fits and starts, and the book is easier to follow if you have a notion of it. Compounded of some familiar elements like Victorian rationalism, it is still a highly original view, and some would call it cranky; though I do not suppose Empson would have minded being called a crank, a word often applied by talent to genius.

It is a fiercely moral view, and readers who imagine talk about literature to be no more than talk are always in for a shock when they read Empson. To argufy, to him, meant to attack false gods, and pretty well any god was false to this devout and ardent atheist. To summarize: humankind, though occasionally capable of humanity and dignity, has been going downhill since about 480 B.C., when Confucius, Buddha, the Second Isaiah and Pythagoras (unbeknown to one another) died. Great and tolerant sages that they were, they were fated to be succeeded by a return to superstition, rather as the Enlightenment and Victorian rationalism in their turn were succeeded by the false gods of various Christian revivals in the last century and in this. (Most of the articles in *Argufying* imply rather than propose this theory of world history: there is a sympathetic article here about the faces of Buddha, but only one mention of Confucius and not much about Pythagoras). Their dogmatic, monotheistic successors included the Judaic revival, which

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was not good; Christianity, which was worse; and Islam, which may easily prove worse still. Monotheism, then, is the Empsonian Satan; and it pops up again in *Milton's God*, where God is devilish and hard put to explain Himself, Milton being shown as largely conscious of the profound difficulties of justifying the severe doctrine of Atonement. To sum up, for readers new to Empson: atheism is morally best; but if we must have theism at all, let there be gods. At least polytheism tends to tolerance, since no one deity among many can ever plausibly be held the one true god.

A third impression is that Empson is a mighty comic. No one else, to my knowledge, in any age has ever written serious criticism in a tone so wildly funny. In an undergraduate essay of 1928, where the book begins, he summarizes his own critical position for the next half century and more by remarking that poetry is written "with the sort of joke you find in hymns." Most people have never noticed there were jokes in hymns, and strictly speaking they are right – though some bad hymns, and to an unbeliever some good ones, are so funny that someone might write an immortal poem out of a recognition that they are so. In the 1930s Empson was to do just that; and though the corpus of his poetry is modest, even small, it contains several poems likely to survive in anthologies of English verse untill the end of time: a highly improbable achievement for a professor of English. As a poet he is a little like the second Earl of Rochester, who provokes a five-page review collected here that shows a deep intuitive feeling for a fellow-aristocrat launched on a life of letters. Empson's wit was high-born, like Rochester's, and it retained to the end its birth-mark. As he remarks here, Rochester wrote in an "absolutely plain-man way" because he was "a great lord and a favorite of the king." Empson was not a lord; and the amusing fact that he was knighted in 1979, near the end of his life, has rather little to do with the matter. But his background was Northern gentry, he rode to hounds when young at Castle Howard, and his manner was a marvellous compound of a twenties Cambridge sophisticate and an eccentric country gentleman. This was a personality which, if a trifle seedy after decades of exposure to academic life in the Far East and in his native land, was yet undeniably grand. When he returned to England from China in the 1950s, he once told me, he agreed to repatriate only if he could go to his native county: hence the chair of English at Sheffield. Nothing was provincial to Empson, since he had nothing of the provincial in him, and everywhere he made his home was his center, and the world's too. The wit that breaks out of these essays – careless, confident, often outrageous – is firmly planted in an assurance of grandeur.

All that is surprising. Not many gentlemen have bothered much with literature unless forced into it – and Empson plainly liked the literary life, not

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least literary London, where he revelled in the London Library and made his home in the highly literary suburb of Hampstead. And if literature is ungentlemanly, literary criticism is arguably even more so. Perhaps Sir Philip Sidney is the only other instance of a gentleman-critic, and they might have got on rather well, though in a review collected here Empson upstages even Sidney by suggesting that his famous refusal of a cup of water on the battlefield is "aggressively holy" and calculated to excite the resentment of any redblooded trooper. Still happily fantasizing, Empson admonishes Sidney by suggesting that "the okay thing would be to drink some of the cup himself and pass it on, leaving most of it to the other man." Game and set to Empson, one feels; and the example illustrates something else about him: his endless propensity to turn everything from Shakespeare's sonnets to Joyce's *Ulysses* into more of a story than it already is, with verb-forms like "would have been" and "would have thought" figuring largely in the creative process. Scholars do not often behave like this. But then Empson was not a scholar, nor did he much want to be one. He respected scholarship, above all the *Oxford English Dictionary*, but as a place to start. It is a supreme test of the generosity of scholars to allow or encourage criticism in the Empsonian mode: to perceive that one labors in order to be used, to have one's results put to an imaginative purpose. Not all scholars are of that mind, to be sure, and Empson's writings have the power to shock those who are not. But if I were an editor of the *OED*, I should think Empson's *The Structure of Complex Words* the greatest compliment ever paid to a great dictionary.

Gentility governs Empson's power of critical dismissal. When he remarks of Donald Davie's *Purity of Diction* that he wished he could distinguish "the part of this story that is true from the part which could be positively harmful," you sense a lofty, urbane judgement by someone who does not commonly take the trouble of verifying a reference or documenting a case; and his dismissal of Herbert Read three pages further on – "a great misfortune that T. E. Hulme was killed before he learnt better, but Sir Herbert can learn better" – looks frightfully grand, as insults go, and as devastating as a wave of the hand from someone who can hardly be bothered. Being "botherheaded" was a long way beneath him, like scholarship. You saw something to be the case in a flash, and you put it down in a sentence or at most a paragraph. Though not above rudeness, and in fact rather in favor of it – he once called it "a hearty indifference to one's own and other people's feelings when a fragment of the truth is in question" – one always feels he is against making a meal of an insult, or of anything. It is for lesser mortals to niggle, emend, edit and in general take trouble.

A fourth (and last) impression is unity. This book makes it clear, as it was not so previously, that Empson's favorable view of authorial intention as

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an essential part of the critic's business was formed at the start and as early as 1930. That is the date of his second "argufying," "Obscurity and Annotation," published here for the first time. As a follower of I. A. Richards, at least in his early days, Empson might be expected to care rather little about intention. In fact he saw the case for it at once, which Richards never did; and though his case altered and developed, as one might wish and expect, between 1930 and *The Structure of Complex Words* in 1951, it was never totally transformed. Nor did Empson's radicalism vanish, as many interwar radicalisms vanished in the anti-Soviet atmosphere of the 1950s. In fact he was sometimes put to it in his later years to insist on his longstanding leftwing credentials, which always looked personal to the point of eccentricity, and in an age when the reverse claim was commonplace: that one had never really been a revolutionary at all. Nor did the ferocity of his anti-Christianity ever wane. Under a cloak of urbanity he lived and died a good hater, never forgetting that literature is about something and that it matters whether that something is true or false.

His only large fault, perhaps, and one not totally absent from this fascinating collection, was an abiding lack of magnanimity. That lack was profoundly connected with an ability to accept that most mortal creatures, perhaps all, hold incompatible views and perform acts incompatible with their views, so that they are not, or not necessarily, to be held to the consequences of their opinions – least of all when those consequences are invisible to themselves. The true Empsonian marks himself out from the vulgar herd by refusing to accept any argument in that form; so perhaps it must now become apparent, to my lasting regret, that I am a mere admirer and not an out-and-out disciple. Empson never accepted that to believe an evil doctrine is not, of itself, to be evil. The truth is that it is not even, altogether clearly, to make it more likely that one might be evil. In the realm of speculative opinion – religion, politics, critical theory and the like – it is surely rather common to hold wicked views without being wicked. Empson's intransigence, which helped to maintain the excitement of his prose to the very end, never allowed him to accept anything like that. "A man who believes in Hell," he once wrote in a letter to Frank Kermode (March 1961), "can't help relating the prospect of it to his feelings about life in general." That remark shows how little Empson understood religion, or indeed belief itself. Lots of people who believe in Hell fail to relate it to their lives. It may be silly and inconsistent of them to do so: but then a lot of people are silly, and practically all are inconsistent. In fact the true believer, at least in our own times, is more likely to be bothered with the contrary problem: how to *remember* that he believes in rewards and punishments in the next world as he goes about his daily life. It is one of the most difficult tasks of mental life, and one we fail daily, to re-

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call what our convictions are and (harder still) to see how they might relate to what we say and do. Our century is sown with instances of those doctrinally convinced of dogmas like class or racial extermination who yet behave benevolently in their private lives. That is an uncomfortable truth, however you look at it. But life gets even more uncomfortable and, what is worse, more delusory, if you do not look at it at all.

GEORGE WATSON

WILBUR'S GIFTS

NEW AND COLLECTED POEMS. By Richard Wilbur.
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. $27.95.

Because a dozen years have passed since Richard Wilbur's last book of poems, a reader's attention will naturally be drawn first to the new work here. Given pride of place in this collection, it is a now familiar blend of Wilbur's gifts for elegant lyricism, intellectual poise, and moral sympathy. What other poet since Frost or MacLeish could bring off such a convincing public poem – full-throated and vividly detailed oratory sustained by a canny historical imagination – as his "On Freedom's Ground," the text for William Schuman's cantata to honor the Statue of Liberty? And no poet since J.V. Cunningham could have contrived so gracefully devastating an epigram as Wilbur's "On Having Mis-Identified a Wild Flower:"

> A thrush, because I'd been wrong,
> Burst rightly into song
> In a world not vague, not lonely,
> Not governed by me only.

There are dreams and riddles here, satires and nature studies, a few expert translations, a poignant elegy for Auden, even a grandly clever poem about those words (*edile*, *esker*, *ranee*, *Elia* and their ilk) that appear only in crossword puzzles.

But best of all is "Lying," an 85-line meditation that opens with the same deceptive casualness it describes: "To claim, at a dead party, to have spotted a grackle, / When in fact you haven't of late, can do no harm." From there the poet goes on, through anecdote and allusion, through all manner of lies, on to "the great lies told with the eyes half-shut / That have the truth in view." Since all things are somewhere, somehow true, there are strictly

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speaking no lies. "And so with that most rare conception, nothing. / What is it, after all, but something missed?" Yet Wilbur's theme is precisely this Stevensian "nothing that is," insinuating itself into our thoughts, our souls, ever since "the garden where we first mislaid / Simplicity of wish and will." "Lying" joins a trio of other poems from earlier collections – "In Limbo," "The Mind-Reader," and "Walking to Sleep" – that brood on in-between states, the borders of consciousness. They are looser, longer than Wilbur's other poems, tentative explorations rather than astute summaries, and they show to best advantage his dramatic abilities and mastery of psychological nuance that in other, more formally rigorous poems are concentrated in a single image. Given the eerie power of their effect, I wish there had been more such poems during his career. But, however well he works on the edge, he has been more comfortable at the balanced center of things. On the other hand, he has deliberately ruled out so much – free verse, the long poem, obscurity and shaggy autobiography, extremes of subject or emotion – that his is actually one of the most difficult sorts of poetry to write these days. If he is a poet of the middle state, such self-imposed restraints (preferences or instincts, he would call them) are no less challenging to the writer. Having been found in a grain of sand, eternity may be the more mysterious. The final lines of another of the new poems in this book, "Icarium Mare," describe his ambition succinctly:

> This is no outer dark
> But a small province haunted by the good,
> Where something may be understood
> And where, within the sun's coronal arc,
>
> We keep our proper range,
> Aspiring, with this lesser globe of sight,
> To gather tokens of the light
> Not in the bullion, but in the loose change.

That last phrase recalls the title of Wilbur's first collection, *The Beautiful Changes*. In 1947, where other poets sounded merely drab or portentous, his work stood out as brightly intellectual and brilliantly turned. He delighted in a "maculate, cracked, askew, / Gay-pocked and potsherd world" of objects and ideas – the *fallen* world, in short, of the religious imagination that yearns for transcendence but works out its salvation among the jagged edges of scattered, flashing bits of a mirrored life. As his subsequent books appeared, it became clear that his abiding subject is desire, "the dreamt land / Toward which all hungers leap, all pleasures pass." The object of that desire

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is often a white goddess. As lover, mate, muse, or stranger, the beloved female figure haunts many of his poems. I am thinking of such poems as "Complaint," "A Late Aubade," "She," "To Ishtar," "Piazza di Spagna, Early Morning," "Apology," and half a dozen more. Wonder more than passion is the note these poems sound. The woman in them is a luminous presence against which so much masculine darkness or confusion stands out. The textures of Wilbur's celebrations are everywhere luxuriant, and such sensuality is missing from most modern poetry.

But his desire is also embodied in landscape and in weather. Rural epiphanies abound, and they serve the purposes both of observation and private revelation. "The heart's wish for life" is over and over again projected onto New England scenes of volatile seasonal changes or surprising urges from underground or overhead. A loneliness haunts these poems too. Like Adam east of Eden, this poet is only "homelessly at home." He writes with the understanding that love and beauty imply a separation. The detached observer in a forest clearing, or the lover awakened by dawn – both share the same ache:

> And call that sorrow sweet
> That teaches us to see
> The final face of love
> In what we cannot be.

Certain poems from Wilbur's early books were quickly anthologized and became standards, as firmly implanted as some of Donne or Shelley. Readers and writers of my generation cut their teeth on them, but later those same models seemed to be a despised rallying point for opponents from every new fashion to campaign against. Wilbur himself, above the fray and perhaps fading from critical attention, seemed impervious to fashions, whether Beat or confessional, expressionist or minimalist or demotic. But of course his work did change and grow in authority, as is clear from reading this big book. Through the years he consistently wrote in a style that flattered the mind his poems celebrated – its powers and limits. But read today, his early poems often strike the ear as quaint. They are written in a rather stagy dialect of their own, one that prefers "fane" to "grove," or "espial" to "sight." He clearly wanted a sort of "poetic diction" that would resist the ordinary and sacrifice neither clarity nor nuance. Yeats and Auden prompted him, to be sure, but the example of two poets has been crucial to his work from the start: Milton and Frost. He may not be temperamentally suitable, but the sinuosity, the Latinate cast and lexical complexities of Wilbur's poems owe much to Milton. Frost is the more obvious tutor. The newest poems in

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this collection still try, as the early ones did, for Frost's buoyant speechliness. "Orchard Trees, January," for instance, opens this way: "It's not the case, though some might wish it so / Who from a window watch the blizzard blow. . . ."

Verse and speech, then, compete within the metrical bounds of his poems. So do two other impulses. One is a strongly moralizing tone that pulls his poems inward toward a clinching abstraction. The other is a dramatic flair that varies and extends his ideas outward into narrative and images. In his very best poems, these are complementary impulses. But over the years, he has come to favor the dramatic. It is not that he shies from rational argument, but he weaves now with a thicker, more homespun wool, and in rather less intricate patterns. The poems that result are even more appealing. And I don't think critics have sufficiently noted Wilbur's extraordinary command of small details, which have a prominent place in his later poems. In a brook, he watches "A startled inchling trout / Of spotted near-transparency, / Trawling a shadow solider than he." The fall twilight "darkens like a fast-reducing broth, / Simmering the shape of things." At a party, "the beaked ladle plies the chuckling ice." Everything has been minutely scrutinized and described with a precision that can startle. And he makes of these details, in gestures stately or homely, many memorable images. Sea-waves suddenly become horses that have slipped their lunar reins. Or at an exotic bird market, the cages come to stand for love, the "one outrageous need":

> We love the small, said Burke. And if the small
> Be not yet small enough, why then by Hell
> We'll cramp it till it knows but how to feed,
> And we'll provide the water and the seed.

Whole poems can be organized by such details. Let me quote a brief one. "For W. H. Auden," in a single long sentence, unfolds its understanding by a series of vignettes that invoke Auden's own concerns – not as ideas but as characters, a catalogue with the specific gravity of any swatch of Whitman. The innocence of each becomes a touching figure for the vulnerability of human life. And because by the end Auden himself has turned into the very poems he'd made, Wilbur is discretely extending an elegiac tradition Auden had honored with *his* poem on Yeats's death:

> Now I am surer where they were going,
> The brakie loping the tops of the moving freight,
> The beautiful girls in their outboard, waving to someone
> As the stern dug in and the wake pleated the water,

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The uniformed children led by a nun
Through the terminal's uproar, the clew-drawn scholar descending
The cast-iron stair of the stacks, shuffling his papers,
The Indians, two to a blanket, passing in darkness,

Also the German prisoner switching
His dusty neck as the truck backfired and started –
Of all these noted in stride and detained in memory
I now know better that they were going to die,

Since you, who sustained the civil tongue
In a scattering time, and were poet of all our cities,
Have for all your clever difference quietly left us,
As we might have known you would, by that common door.

This *New and Collected Poems* provides us the chance to test our old reactions to Wilbur's work. Though there are many other poems here that will delight readers and instruct new writers, I want to offer my own short list of those poems central to our understanding and appreciation of Wilbur's career: "Praise in Summer," "Water Walker," "Cicadas" (ForWerly "Cigales"), "Giacometti," "Clearness," "Grasse: The Olive Trees," "'A world without Objects Is a Sensible Emptiness,'" "A Baroque Wall-Fountain in the Villa Sciarra," "Looking into History," "After the Last Bulletins," "Love Calls Us to the Things of This World," "Fall in Corrales," "The Undead," "Advice to a Prophet," "Walking to Sleep," "The Agent," "On the Marginal Way," "The Mind-Reader," "The Fourth of July," "In Limbo," "A Storm in April," "Shad-Time," "For W. H. Auden," and "Lying."

An enviable list. If there is sometimes too much varnish, the draughtsmanship is always impeccable, the composition noble, the coloring warm and affecting. Wilbur's poems do not especially gain by being read in bulk – as, say, Lowell's do. Each of his best poems is a richness to be savored, not gobbled with the rest. But this collection is a welcome convenience, and I hope it helps discourage those readers who with faint praise classify Wilbur as merely a representative poet, the spokesman for a period or an aesthetic. There are poems throughout this book that will take any preconception by surprise, poems – we realize with sudden joy – that we've had in mind and by heart for years. That is just the first sign this book is likely to remain a classic.

J. D. McCLATCHY

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BEYOND MINIMALISM

DUSK AND OTHER STORIES. By James Salter. North Point Press.$14.95.
EMPEROR OF THE AIR. By Ethan Canin. Houghton Mifflin Co. $15.95.
WHERE I'M CALLING FROM. NEW AND SELECTED STORIES. By Raymond Carver. Atlantic Monthly Press. $19.95.

A plethora of articles in literary journals and mass-circulation newspapers alike have recently railed against the perfidious influence of something called minimalism on the American short story. At the same time there've been an approximately equal number of articles celebrating the quantity of fine stories being published, articles which refer to our time as a veritable renaissance of the short story. I side more with the second position, for I think our time is rich with good stories, much more so that it is with novels, and that perhaps this has always been so. Morever, I seriously question the validity of the term "minimalism" insofar as it's supposed to represent a bona fide literary movement or new aesthetic. The best writers associated with it (Frederick Barthelme, Raymond Carver, and Bobbie Ann Mason) are quite original writers after all, far more distinct from each other than they are similar. At any rate, assuming that the term has a kind of practical meaning, no more than a handful of "minimalists" exert a discernible influence on the contemporary short story.

It seems to me that we are living in a period where no single conception of fiction dominates, a period that is open, to an unprecedented degree, to many different conceptions of the story. The writers under consideration here are cases in point. Although the celebrated novelist James Salter may write enough short declarative sentences to be misconstrued as a minimalist, in many respects his work takes an opposite approach. In his first collection of stories, *Dusk*, almost all are written in the third person past tense (as opposed to the minimalist's favorite first person, present tense) and in the best ones – "American Express," "Foreign Shores," and "The Cinema" – he shifts point of view interestingly from one character to another. The writing here is precise and elegant.

At times, however, a tone of world-weariness prevails. Instead of the tension and vitality of "The Cinema," for instance, there's an all too knowing irony and an enervating sense of defeat before the battle's been fought. This tone is most troublesome when it exists in stories with insufficiently developed characters. In the title story we witness the final loss of Mrs. Chandler, a divorced middle-aged woman. We are told: "She was a woman who had

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read books, played golf, gone to weddings, whose legs were good, who had weathered storms, a fine woman whom no one now wanted." But it is difficult to feel much of anything for her, in spite of all the facts we've been told, simply because to know someone is a very different matter from knowing information *about* them. Since Mrs. Chandler never comes to life, it's hard to care about her lover's decision to leave her.

A similar problem plagues "Twenty Minutes." Again the protagonist is a lonely middle-aged woman who this time is isolated from humanity as a result of a gruesome horseback-riding accident. While she vainly waits for help, she recalls a series of sexual and romantic disappointments. Once more I felt the disconcerting sensation of trying to care about a clearly imperiled character I hardly knew (the accident happens in the beginning of the story.) Unfortunately, after her string of banal memories she still seemed more like a symbol than a human being. Perhaps that is the point, and Salter is trying to create an Everywoman. Still, I prefer his stories where the characters have strong individual presences and he is more realistic and less impressionistic.

In "Foreign Shores," he writes masterfully about a woman's jealousy of her live-in childsitter, Truus, who has a close relationship with her son. The story is complex, told from different points of view, and is thoroughly involving. It's an example of the riveting fiction that occurs intermittently in this collection.

Ethan Canin, the twenty-seven year-old winner of a Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship, offers many of the pleasures of the traditional story in his debut collection, *Emperor of the Air*. The prose is well-crafted, often charming and energetic. There is a fairly distinct sense of a beginning, middle, and end to these stories, and the majority of them have satisfying resolutions. These stories also have a definite sense of setting and a balanced view of society. Indeed, Canin avoids most of the pitfalls of the young writer, though not all of them. He writes perhaps once too often from the point of view of an old man who sounds suspiciously like his characters who are in their twenties. Also, there's a formulaic quality to many of these stories. Typically, his protagonist is an appealingly normal person who suddenly starts exhibiting "strange behavior" such as Jodi in "Where We Are Now," who insists on visiting available homes with her husband and a real estate agent, when she has no intention or means of buying one. The eccentric behavior is a symptom, of course, which Canin uses to explore a conflict. However, these conflicts are often resolved too neatly, as if to illustrate a maxim. Thus the husband/narrator who prides himself on honesty decides to play along with Jodi's dishonest behavior and lies to the real estate agent himself because love is stronger than honesty or a man's convictions. Thus the old high-school astronomy teacher in the title story realizes that love is worth more

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than knowledge, and the old husband in "We Are Nighttime Travelers" realizes that you are never too old to love, as he finally embraces his wife after years of not touching her. It is obvious that love fares extremely well in Canin's world, but because in many ways he is wise beyond his years, more often than not Canin's stories are moving rather than sentimental.

The late Raymond Carver was generally considered our leading minimalist, perhaps literary minimalism's first institution. But institution or not, he was also an evolving artist, as the publication of his *New and Selected Stories* (drawn from the entire range of those he published) makes abundantly clear. It soon becomes obvious that the often abrupt stories from his first book *Will You Be Quiet, Please?* are technically less sophisticated and generally less resonant than the stories from his second book, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. Similarly, there is a dramatic expansion in his scope of reference and narrative development, a sharpening of characterization in *Cathedral*, as compared with his second book. Most excitingly, Carver was still developing and refining his art and, in the seven previously uncollected stories published here, was writing at the top of his form. The term *minimalist*, which was always of negligible value when applied to Carver, is certainly of dubious value to the Carver of *Cathedral,* who composed such full-bodied stories as "Feathers," "A Small Good Thing," and "Cathedral." In each of these stories more than one character receives a detailed, almost traditional development, while the past is also explored and revealed to be a force at least equal to the present.

The truth is Carver is *sui generis*. Like Kafka, Borges, Beckett, and Céline, he's an important writer both in spite of and because of his limitations. Carver triumphed as these other writers did, because he discovered his own corner of emotional real estate, and while it is somewhat narrow, he cultivated it assiduously. As a result, he developed a voice so distinct and alive that he's often unnervingly funny. It's his voice, more than his narrative situations or characters, that ultimately accounts for his power. Carver's attempt to increase his emotional range and vary his point of view as his career developed was admirable. A number of his later stories, for example, are narrated by women, and in the recently written "Chekhov," Carver tries to recreate the death of Chekhov and the way it is announced to the world. Still, Carver's strongest work is told by essentially the same voice with essentially the same unblinking sensibility. If his work is not as strong or original as such equally idiosyncratic writers as Kafka or Céline, it is as poignant and authentic. Carver's voice is so clear and true that it entrances us time and again. It is also a voice that increasingly expressed joy as well as bleakness as it began to admit both epiphany and redemption to its world.

RICHARD BURGIN

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ROUSSEAU'S QUEST

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU: TRANSPARENCY AND OBSTRUCTION. By Jean Starobinski. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. University of Chicago Press. $19.95.

Jean Starobinski's enormously influential study of Rousseau, published in French in 1957, is a welcome addition to the bibliography of European criticism available in English. One of the most celebrated achievements of what has been called the "criticism of consciousness" associated with Geneva, Starobinski's phenomenological meditation on Rousseau is based on the assumption that a writer's work is the embodiment of an authorial consciousness that both precedes and exceeds its textual incarnation, an assumption in practice incompatible with neither subsequent deconstructive criticism nor traditional biography and history.

While Starobinski's analysis appears to reify a host of problematic ontological notions, his actual reading is very different. For Starobinski, Rousseau's quest for "self-awareness" is not self-evident and unquestioned; it functions as the occasion for either personal or social liberation only on a structure of paradox: "Self-awareness," a wry Starobinski reminds us, "is intimately associated with the possibility of becoming someone else." Rousseau's famous conflicts are handled, not as struggles to be overcome, but as enabling tensions. Rousseau "was . . . contaminated by the very disease he was attacking," wishing "to set forth, in *writing*, a philosophy paradoxically based on the rejection of literature."

The many oxymora in Rousseau are therefore constitutive rather than contradictory: "There is," for example, "a 'natural order' in the very historical process that has estranged man from his 'natural condition' "; "the more general his protest, the more solitary he becomes"; "no words," in short, "can convey the inner conviction of innocence, while fiction proves strangely believable." The rhythm of Starobinski's rhetoric is like Rousseau's in its thick symmetry of formulations:

> This new age is characterized by a crucial discovery: for the first time consciousness has a past. But this discovery, if it brings new wealth, also reveals an essential impoverishment, a lack. The temporal dimension that opens up behind the present moment is perceptible only because it is fleeing into inaccessibility. The mind turns back to an earlier world and sees that world, which once belonged to it, as lost forever. As the child's happiness slips away, the mind recognizes the boundless value of this now-forbidden joy. There is nothing left to do

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but create the poetic myth of a bygone era.

In such repetitive *topoi* Starobinski finds nothing less than "a behavioral archetype, a constant element in Rousseau's life and imagination. "He wants," in words that look forward to Jacques Derrida's later reading of Rousseau, "a presence that is also a partial absence."

Starobinski's focus, then, is neither the ideal transparency to which Rousseau aspires, nor the inevitable obstructions – language, laws, history – that disallow such unmediated vision, but the ratio between the two:

> Is there, then, such a thing as a natural state? At best it is an imaginary position, midway between two extremes. There, however, movement does not cease. The "natural" self is nothing more than a fleeting image, glimpsed in passing and blurred by motion. My self is merely something that I lack, something that constantly eludes my grasp. I am always someone else, someone without a stable identity. . . . The "self" is not the unattainable position of rest but the anxiety that makes tranquillity impossible. My truth reveals itself by wresting me from the grip of what I had mistaken for a fundamental fact (which disappears the moment it is scrutinized), the "nature" wherein I had thought my "true self" was located.

We are only a step away from a deconstructive reading; the chief difference – tone aside – is that Starobinski locates Rousseau's productive paradoxes within a rhetoric of temporality or "duration" that is experiential rather than epistemological, existential rather than semiotic. "Signs failed to give Rousseau access to the world," writes a master of the counterpunch, "but, like the waters that reflected Narcissus's own image, magically made his ego the slave of its reflection."

From a historical point of view, this highly particular structure of paradox is, argues, Starobinski, new with Rousseau, and the oppositions to which it leads – between transparency and obstruction, authenticity and alienation, fullness and lack, freedom and bondage – inaugurate a revolutionary technology of both selfhood and literature. "For the first time," concludes Starobinski, "the problem of an 'existential' transcendence of literature arose outside the confines of traditional religious spirituality." Such transcendence of literature is imagined, of course, within a decidedly literary space, not the least among the ironies that sustain Starobinski's Rousseau in what remains a parable of interpretation.

PERRY MEISEL

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THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF A LIVING AUTHOR. By Robert Musil. Translated by Peter Wortsman. Eridanos Press. $21.00.

In the foreword to this fascinating collection of prose pieces, essays, and short stories, Robert Musil faces the question of his book's potential merit given the oddities and minutiae with which it is filled:

> To publish nothing but little tales and observations amidst a thundering, groaning world; to speak of incidentals when there are so many vital issues; to vent one's anger at phenomena that lie far off the beaten track: this may doubtless appear as weakness to some. . . . But then a certain difference in size has always existed – between the weight of poetic utterances and the six thousand, two-hundred million cubic-foot mass of earth that zooms through space untouched by poetry.

This is the challenge of both Musil and his *Posthumous Papers*. Instead of constructing elaborate arguments as to the purpose and intent of his or the book's existence, his dry, sardonic wit chooses to simply point out the imbalance between any such aspirations and the reality at hand. At the same time, what on the surface may sound like defeatism or false humility is, in fact, a profound faith in the ability of reason to observe and to know, to weigh and to judge, no matter how unreasonable the German political climate must have seemed to Musil when he first published the volume in 1936. Dedicated to closely observed details and the consciousness necessary to sift them, his is an aesthetic of refined degrees, honed and exacting, one in which less is truly more, no matter the necessity he seems to feel in seeing an object or idea from every possible angle until the vision his work embodies ends up as prismatic as it is encyclopedic.

Born in Klagenfurt, Austria in 1880, Musil is best known for his monumental novel, *The Man Without Qualities*, as well as the shorter *Young Törless*. Trained as a mathematician, engineer, and philosopher, he chose to pass up a potentially successful career in any of these fields in order to pursue a life in writing accomplished between stints working as a librarian, publisher, and civil servant while living in Vienna and Berlin. In 1938, Musil left Austria for Switzerland and permanent exile, his keen awareness no doubt warning him of the cataclysm to follow, though his sudden death in Geneva in

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1942 prevented him from seeing its end, as well as the completion of his masterpiece despite the first two published volumes and additional thousand pages of drafts and notes for *The Man Without Qualities* he did finish.

Given the Proustian nature of Musil's style and output in capturing the shadings of *fin de siècle* Vienna in *The Man Without Qualities*, the brevity and incisiveness of his Posthumous Papers is somewhat ironic. Divided into three sections titled "Pictures," "Ill-Tempered Observations," and "Unstorylike Stories," respectively, the book consists of a series of discussions of topics ranging from flypaper to funerals, boardinghouses to binoculars, each of them extremely short and in many ways resisting paraphrase because of the fusion of language and consciousness inherent to the clarity of thought at work within them. Musil himself comments that most of the pieces were written for newspapers between 1920 and 1929, but despite the restrictions in length this must have entailed, it's the compression he submits his subject matter to that causes it to shine forth in multifaceted ways.

Even the fiction gathered in the last section lives up to its "unstorylike" heading by refusing to develop a strong narrative line, though each of the stories does evoke a sense of character, if only through the mystery of why they are told. In the longest of them, "The Blackbird," we are witness to a man telling his friend of three distinct memories. The first is of waking one night and hearing a nightingale sing, only to discover it to be a blackbird, upon which he leaves his sleeping wife for good. Meanwhile the other two memories involve a moment of spiritual transcendence when the man barely escapes death on a battlefield, and then the reappearance of the blackbird on a window sill when the man returns to his parents' house upon their death. Though his friend asks about the "common thread" between the stories, the speaker can reply only that "if I knew the point of it all, then I wouldn't need to have told it in the first place." This can also be said about most of the pieces in the book, for no matter how oblique the message may seem, it's the luminosity with which the images are presented and the story told that rivets our attention. Much like the storyteller in "The Blackbird," the enticement for the reader lies in our "hearing a whisper" inside the story parallel to "a rustling outside," Musil never allowing us the casual certainty of "distinguishing between the two."

This is not to say that the book is just obscurity and bafflement. In "Clearhearing," an obvious tenderness is portrayed when a man describes the "intimate I" of his mate as he listens to her movements through the dark preparing for bed, himself wondering at the fact that "I have long since given up on anything imaginable, while you evidently keep finding new things to do in the realm of reality." Similarly, at a "Slovenian Village Funeral," the image of a hand playing with a frolicking dog behind a mourner's back awakens the

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grieving narrator to an appreciation of the living when he finds himself "shot through with eagerness and anxiety in anticipation of the handshake that my housemates would offer me after the funeral . . . and a few fitting words that were not to be contradicted: maybe, that misfortune brings people closer together, or something like that." The way this last qualifier buoys the sentiment and keeps it from floating into the merely sentimental is a good example of how closely Musil's choice of words is attuned to the consciousness he sets forth, Peter Wortsman's fine translation also helping to convey such subtle momentary flashes. Noting in "The Paintspreader" that "it is far less that people twist words than it is that words twist people," Musil is that rare writer who seems to stand outside of his own gift, his facility with language and perception being so masterly as to inspire wonder rather than analysis, our own sight cleansed and altered by the chill light enveloping his work, granting us a slant perspective much like appearances studied through binoculars, "incomprehensible and terrible, the way things must have been on the first day after creation."

Titled "Binoculars," the essay from which this last quote is taken also illustrates the essence of Musil's genius, namely vision, but in both the clinical and mythic sense. Stating in his foreword that the things he sees "are likely to occur to every man who observes human life in tiny traits by which it carelessly reveals itself," Musil is someone who deeply distrusts the spiritual, though in fact it is the degree to which he invokes rational, quantitative observations which gives life to the mystical qualities of his writing. Hence, though much of the essay on binoculars is dedicated to describing the technical feats and skewered insights they provide him, he is quick to draw back from violating the context of the images he possesses, choosing instead to reaffirm the bond between the clothes we wear and the indefinable beings who wear them:

> There is between our clothes and ourselves, and between our customs and ourselves, a convoluted relationship of moral credit according to which we first lend customs and clothes their entire significance, and then borrow it back again, paying interest on the interest; and this is why we border on bankruptcy when we cut off their line of credit.

What's important to realize is that the seed for this meditation is a woman walking down the street as deciphered by the binoculars, that and no more, Musil's clarity of detail advancing him to the high, clear air of moral

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ground, but never the other way around. The result is that, indeed, "the binoculars contribute both to our understanding of the individual, as well as to an ever deepening lack of comprehension of the nature of humanity," Musil's own meticulous vision making us question our own by "dissolving the commonplace connections and discovering new ones."

"Layer by layer art strips life bare," writes Musil in "Black Magic," but in this small book packed with brilliance the process is as pleasurable as it is provocative. As for the question whether or not these "little tales" exude any "weakness," perhaps it makes sense to return again to Musil's foreword where he, as in so many places, provides the most succinct and insightful answer:

> The faith that I nonetheless place in the durability of these little satires derives from a line of Goethe's, that may without forfeit of truth be modified to suit my purpose. So it reads: "In one thing done badly you can see the simile of all things done badly." This line offers a ray of hope that the critique of little errors may not be rendered obsolete, even in times when so much larger errors are being made.

PETER FILKINS

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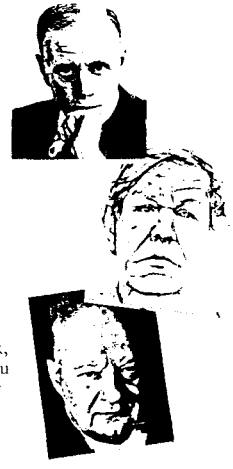

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LETTERS

To the Editor:

Gerald Graff's solution to the debate over the future of the humanistic studies (*PR* 2, 1989) sounds eminently sane and sensible until one gives it a closer look. Professor Graff proposes that instead of continuing the current standoff (between the universalist ideals of traditional education and the more particularist approaches that have entered the academy since the sixties), we instead incorporate all points of view into the undergraduate curriculum, making the debate itself available to students and letting it be part of their education.

But those who really care about the content of education cannot countenance this solution, for some of the same reasons that most knowledgeable people cannot countenance the teaching of creationism as a scientific theory alongside evolutionism. This is because on the basis of the available evidence creationism does not stack up as a reputable intellectual theory. Likewise, the new particularist approaches, often based on *parti pris* and resistant to demands for evidence, logic, and so on, are not valid or worthy intellectual approaches. They have gained entrance into the academy through intellectual and political bullying, not through persuasion. Also, to those concerned about the content of education rather than simple formal solutions, not all approaches can coexist so easily and expansively and ceremoniously as Professor Graff seems to feel. Some cancel each other out. Once you have appreciated Virginia Woolf's idea of the need for the aesthetic transcendence of personal grievance in literature, for example, the feminist aesthetic of deliberate emphasis on personal grievance can look pretty mean-spirited, limited and even false.

The stakes are too high in the academy to permit simple cosmetic solutions. There is a content involved, and a casual pluralism dissolves it, making it appear as if all ideas are of equal worth when they are not.

Carol Iannone
New York, New York

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my exasperation over the often-repeated argument, stated again by Doris Lessing (*PR* 3, 1989), in the Rushdie affair. This is a kind of half-truth not quite worthy of a writer of Doris Lessing's standing, who has a reputation for her learning as well as for her accomplishments as an outstanding novelist. If one thought of making an impression on Khomeini and his followers, the argument is bound to fail because it does not meet the case.

It seems to me that the challenge of the Ayotollah lies elsewhere and is not met by talking of freedom of

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speech. Considering that it is a man's life that is at stake, talk of freedom of speech to oppose the Ayotollah's order of summary execution is perhaps somewhat flippant. Liberal opinion which has rallied in support of Rushdie should, I believe, do what it can to meet the challenge where it actually is. In other words, some effort seems urgently called for to meet the Ayotollah on his own ground.

M. C. Gabriel
Meghalaya, India

William Phillips replies:

Clearly, though not everyone may have recognized this, the death sentence is an extreme form of censorship.

To the Editor:

I must respond to William Phillips's "Comment" (*PR* 4, 1989), pertaining to the debatable art of Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano.

Mr. Phillips consistently refers to a *flag in urine*, presumably exemplifying the work of Serrano. Serrano's controversial piece was a photograph of a plastic crucifix – complete with figurine – in a vessel of urine. The flag was not submersed in bodily fluids, but rather was displayed prone as an inviting door mat. Scott Tyler's piece, *What Is the Correct Way to Display the American Flag* was the patriotic hair-raiser shown at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago.

Karen Zarker
Chicago, Illinois

William Phillips replies:

I noticed the mistake, but it was too late to correct it, though I should say that Andres Serrano's photograph was not so memorable that one couldn't forget it.

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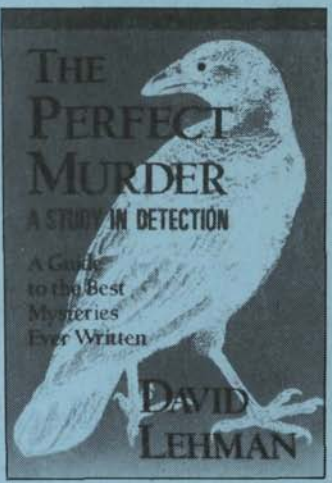

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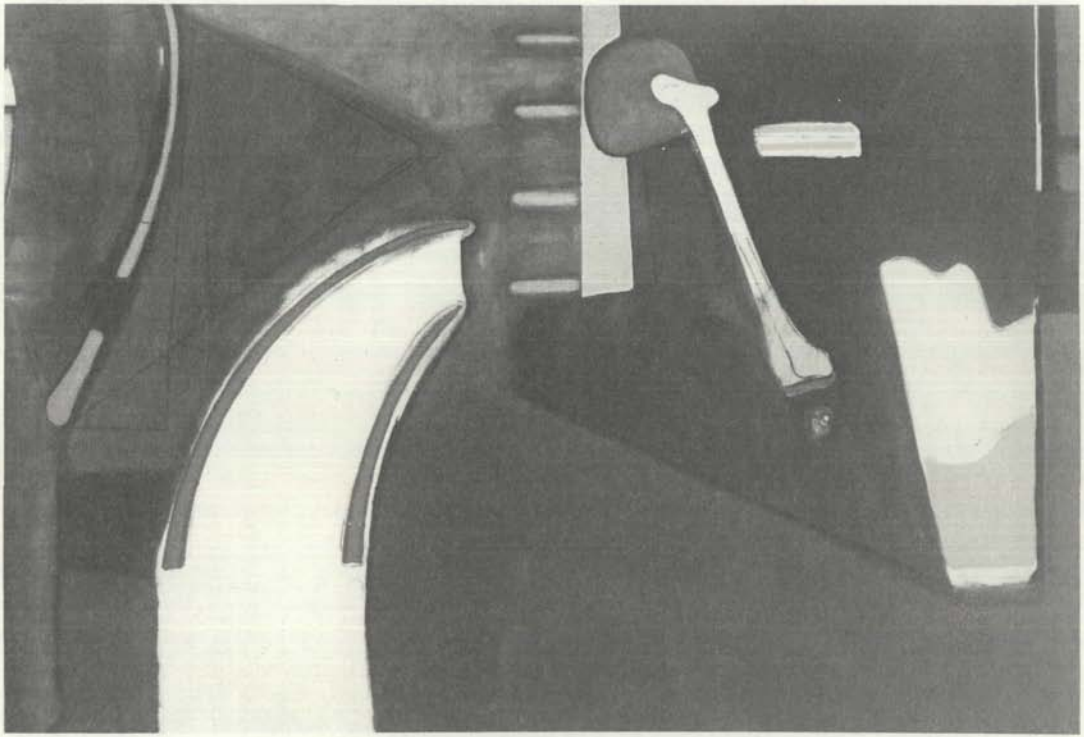

White Threat (1968) by Stephen Greene. 50" x 70". Oil on canvas. Courtesy of Marilyn Pearl Gallery.

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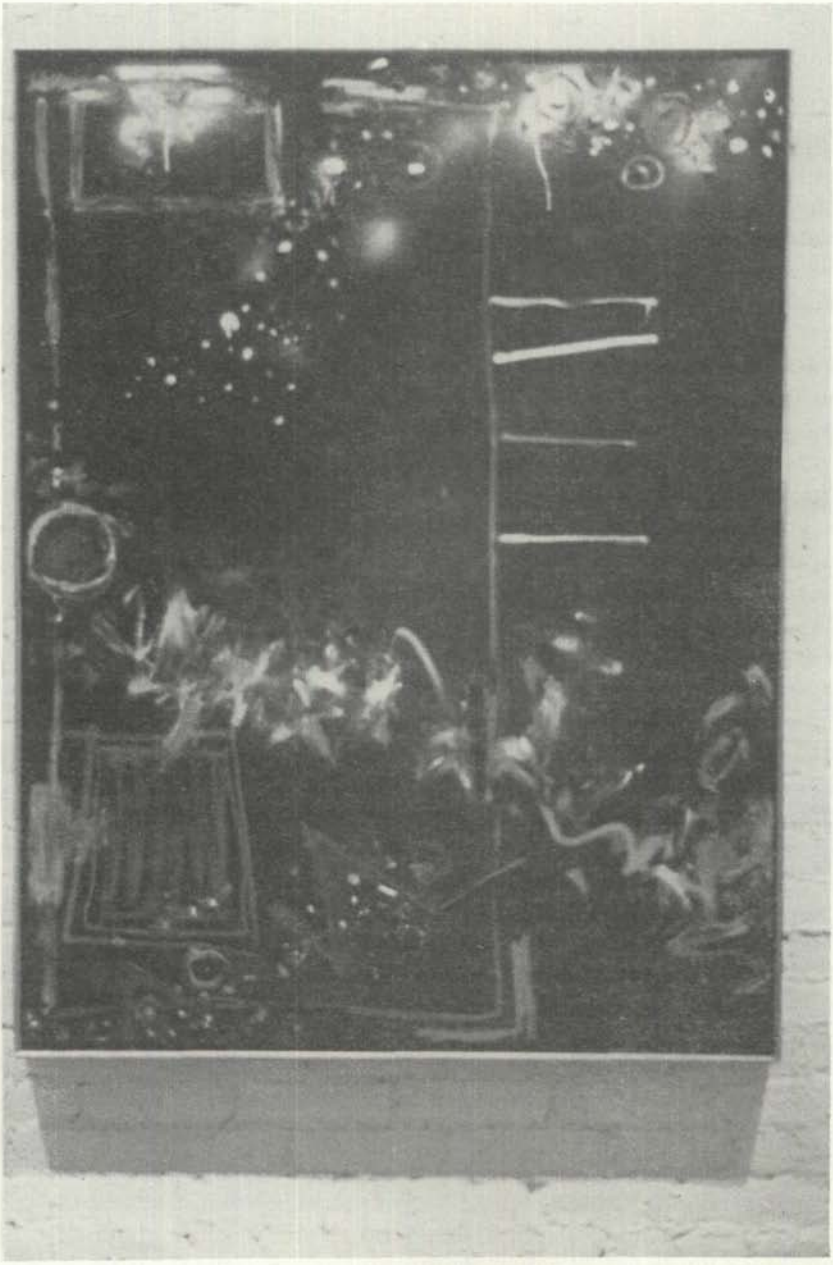

A Blue Inside Red on a Black (1989) by Joyce Weinstein. 50" x 38". Oil and mixed media on canvas.

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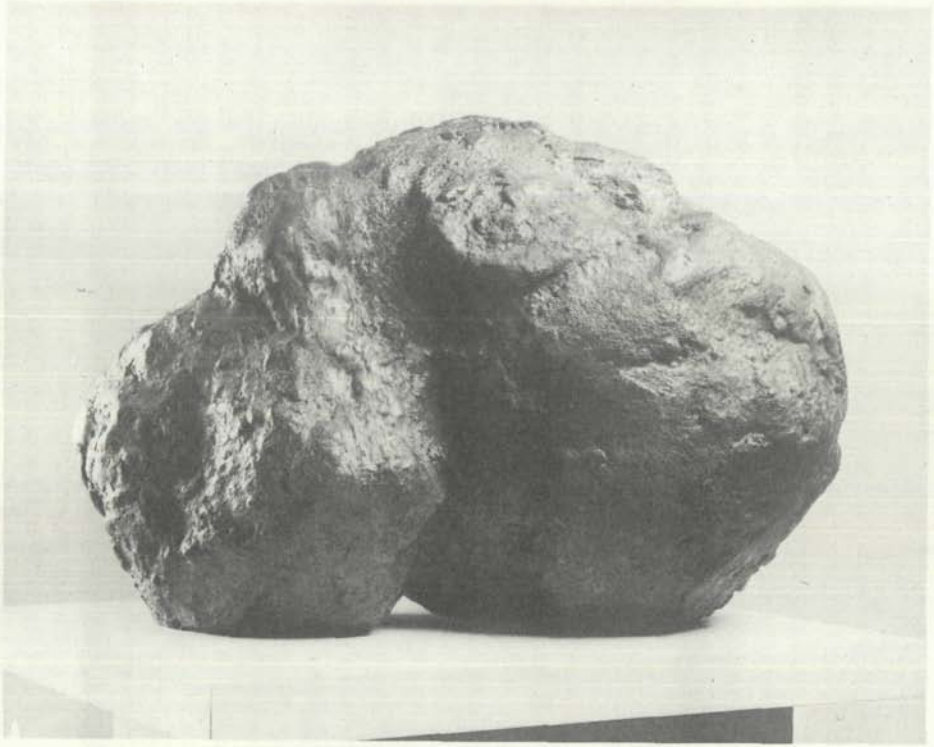

Thales (1988) by William Tucker. 18" x 24" x 16". Bronze. Courtesy of David McKee Gallery. Photo credit Brian Albert.

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The Enchanted Forest (1989) by Sheila Girling. 52 and 1/2" x 35 and 1/2". Acrylic and collage on canvas. Courtesy of Francis Graham-Dixon Gallery.

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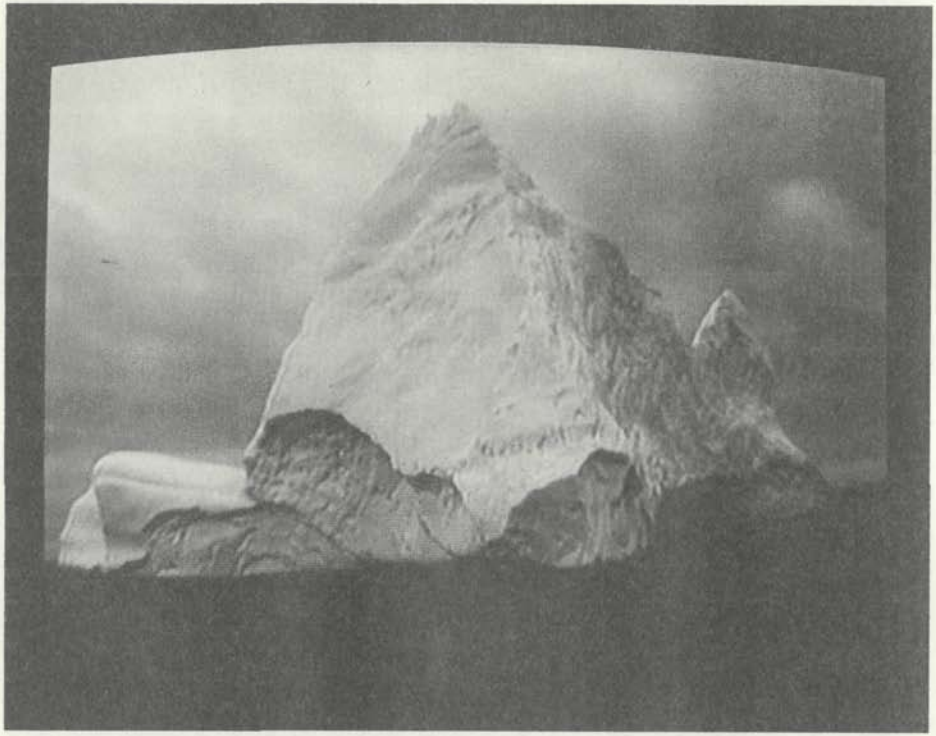

Wilderness (1986) by Mary Lucier. Single off-screen video detail from installation. Courtesy of Greenberg-Wilson Gallery.

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